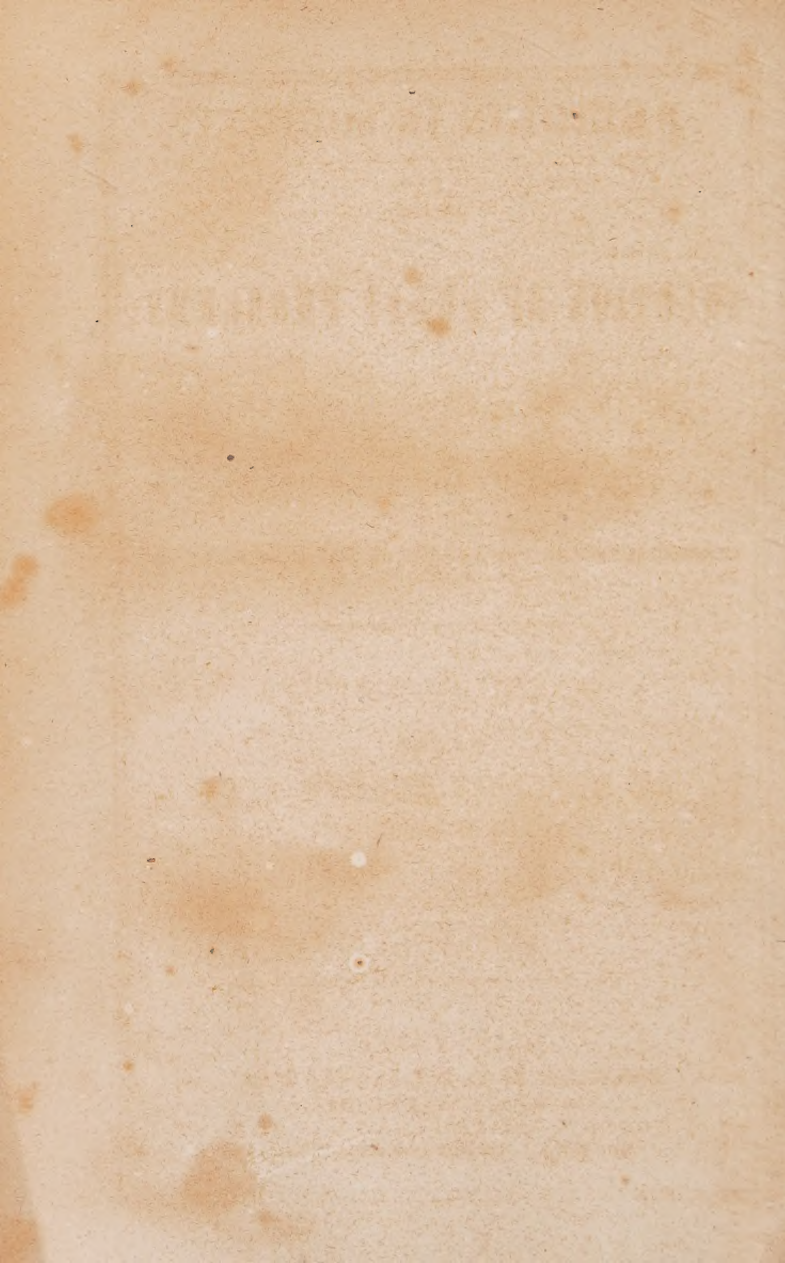


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BENITIÆ.

No



RELIGION IN SOCIETY,
OR THE
SOLUTION OF GREAT PROBLEMS;

PLACED WITHIN
THE REACH OF EVERY MIND.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE ABBE MARTINET,

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY THE
RT. REV. JOHN HUGHES, D. D.
BISHOP OF NEW-YORK.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION

BY THE

RIGHT REV. JOHN HUGHES, D.D.,

BISHOP OF NEW YORK.

THE work of which these volumes are a translation has been very extensively read and much spoken of in France, where it was first published. It passes under review a great variety of interesting topics, bearing on Religion and Society, which the author has arranged in an appropriate order, and discussed with more than ordinary tact and ability. His labors in the Catholic cause are not unworthy of being placed next to those of Moehler and Balmez. It has not, indeed, the metaphysical depth of the one, nor yet the tranquil scientific spirit and arrangement of the other. But for the masses, as a popular manual against the discordant but numerous errors of the day, it is perhaps superior to either.

It bears in the original the stamp of French national genius, which will not take away from its interest in the translation. No country in Europe has exhibited so desperate and protracted a struggle between truth and error, as that which has been going on in France with almost unabated earnestness during the last seventy-five or eighty years. In no other country have errors of almost every description found such able and enthusiastic advocates. But on the other hand, no nation beside has furnished, during the same period, so brilliant an array of great and glorious men engaged in the defence of truth. Every error whether against faith or morals, against society or humanity has been taken up as soon as broached, examined, exposed and triumphantly refuted.

Whoever has paid any attention to the more recent wanderings of

the human mind, must have observed that within the last quarter of a century, the system which the spirit of error had previously adopted in making war on truth, has been entirely changed. Formerly its advocates were in the habit of appealing sometimes to Scripture, and at all times to human reason, in support of its destructive theories. But the defenders of truth pressing closely on its march, possessed of equal ability and a better cause, had exposed its fallacies and made it clear that both Scripture and reason with one voice repudiated its bad principles and false doctrines. Hence the change of tactics. At present the appeals to Scripture and to reason are few and feeble. The advocates of error, who would regard it as a merciful dispensation if religion were once for all banished from the thoughts of men, have learned to disguise their enmity, and to speak of religion with affected hypocrisy and expansive hollowness. To attack the Holy Scriptures, they have discovered, would be to sound the alarm. To appeal to reason for support, would be to expose the threadbare condition of their hopes, as well as their cause. Hence the actual phase which the spirit of error presents at this moment, in its mode of warfare against God and man, is different from any thing that it has hitherto exhibited. It now stoops to cajole, to flatter, to enlist, to conciliate and bring into coalition with itself, the mere sensual, faculties susceptibilities and passions of our poor fallen nature. Having lost its cause before the high tribunal of public reason, to which it had formerly appealed, it would now accept a favorable verdict from the low animal feelings and propensities, by which man, especially when he indulges them, is most nearly assimilated to the brute creation. It elevates the sentient faculties above the intellectual, the lowest attributes of our nature above the highest, which it treats with indifference or affects to ignore. It confines its zeal to the condition of man, in his present state, and adjourns the question of his eternal future. It sheds bitter tears of sympathy over the miseries to which God (that is, if it admits such a being) in the actual economy, has left him exposed. It insinuates and proclaims aloud, where it can do so with impunity, that, in providing for the temporal well-being of man, religion has proved recreant to its mission, and society has abused and betrayed its trust. In contrast with the actual inequalities and sufferings which afflict our race, it spreads out before us its embellished and tempting theories of society organized on new and imaginary principles. The family, the school, the guild, the State, the Church, all and each must be remodeled, in strict accordance with the wants, the wishes, the complex tastes, the sympathies, the varied susceptibilities and special

aptitudes of men and women, individually considered, as they shall be found in this "Paradise Regained," which the spirit of error is preparing for the future abode of "humanity."

Yes, all "humanity," no Divinity. A God, a Christ, Redemption, Revelation, Grace, Sacraments, a blessed and beautiful connexion, between man's present condition and his future state — these the spirit of error treats in the present day with the courtesy of silent indifference, or ill-disguised contempt. It does not quarrel with its dupes for believing and hoping in them all. To do so would be at variance equally with its policy and its politeness.

But, to mitigate the strictness of human and divine laws, to build palaces for the future abode of the working classes where hovels now stand; to hold out to them gilded promises of warm clothing in winter, and light dresses in summer; to abridge their hours of labor and augment its compensation; to economize thus abundant leisure during which "humanity" may play on the piano, and improve itself by reading reviews, novels and newspapers; to anticipate and provide for a broad margin in domestic and social manners, on the central and dividing line of which, *like* shall meet *like* by sympathetic affinity, and mutual attraction; in short, to dazzle the eye and seduce the hearts of the suffering portion of our race by a cruel, because visionary, exhibition of such results, which cannot be realized, and which in many respects would be execrable if they could, is the latest and actual system of warfare against both God and man, which is now being proclaimed and carried on by the spirit of error and its living, speaking and writing agents and advocates.

There is much low, mean cunning in this system. It erects humanity into the Idol and calls upon men to reverence, worship and adore their own fallen nature. It does not mention the fact, that in this worship, the priest and the Deity are one and the same. The former swings the censor, it is true, but the fragrance of the burning incense reaches only his own nostrils — for *he* is "humanity."

God and revelation, the Church, Scripture and even reason, though not specially proscribed, are left out, or considered as topics of sheer indifference, in this new complex heresy, emanating not so much from the wandering of the human mind as from the passions of the human heart. It is known in different countries by different names; and the several schools into which its advocates are divided are contending as to which will have the honor of giving it ultimate stability of shape, form and dimensions. So far as it is yet known in the United States, its minor degrees may be all comprehended in its aggregate term —

transcendentalism. Its oracles have invented for its communication to the world, a special but very indefinite style of their own. They employ accurate Anglo-Saxon terms to express, whether in speech, or in writing, the abstract sentimentalities, vague aspirations and unjointed affections, which they offer to the public as substitutes for those permanent convictions by which mankind have been held together so long, but which are now to be removed and overthrown. Their expositions, it is true, of the new system are a compound of the sublime and ridiculous, in equal proportions. They are sublime, inasmuch as the people to whom they are addressed, wonder at their eloquence, whilst they can only catch feeble and evanescent glimpses of their meaning; ridiculous, because the authors themselves, as to their own meaning, are precisely in the same predicament.

Still whether such exhibitions are sublime or ridiculous or both together, the progress of the doctrines which they are intended to propagate cannot but be productive of serious damage to the cause of religion; in all its good influences on society. Some of the grounds on which this conclusion is founded, are obvious to all. Protestantism is drifting, or rather has drifted, in all directions, from its primeval and central moorings. True, it still professes to cling to the Bible, as its anchor; but thread by thread and twist by twist, its friends have been undoing the cable, by the strength of which it supposed itself riding in safety. The Bible among Protestants has been made a common anchor for religious error as well as for religious truth. Accordingly, when we reflect on the success with which Mormonism, Millerism, and other extravagances have recently appealed to Protestantism for sympathy and sustenance, we are forced to conclude that, so far as the truth of revelation and religion are concerned, the Protestant mind has been weakened by the successive shocks which it has had to undergo, and is wearing down by the daily abrasions and attritions to which it is exposed, between the bold enunciation of religious errors, claiming a Biblical sanction, on one side, and the ambiguous, timid and stammering defence of religious truth, on the other. It began its own unhappy career by rejecting the "cloud by day," and having thus violated the condition on which the privilege of guidance was vouchsafed to man by pitying Heaven, the "pillar of fire by night" has equally disappeared from its vision.

If the Protestant mind be itself thus debilitated and defenceless, how can it protect Christianity against the stealthy and subtle approaches of the passion-god which the spirit of error is now introducing among men, to be worshipped under the name of "humanity."

But the children of the Catholic Church themselves, although they have the rock of ages to stand, and the pillar of truth to lean upon for support, are yet not beyond the reach of danger from the rising heresy. Already we have observed unmistakeable symptoms of the new infection, in the speeches and writings of some who still call themselves Catholics. Their religious health must have been already unsound, or the poison could not have taken such precocious effect. One of the worst signs of their malady is that they labor with desperate zeal to inoculate with its virus all who come within the reach of their influence. We would recommend them to procure a brochure published by our author, and which attracted much attention at the time, under the quaint title of "A Cure for the Bite of the Black Serpent."

Whether, then, as enabling Protestants to preserve those doctrines of Christianity to which they still cling, as "fundamental;" or as enabling the Catholic to stand forewarned and on his guard, not for his Church or its doctrines, but for himself; the work which is now offered to the American public in an English dress is one which in my opinion cannot be too widely circulated. It treats of many errors besides that to which special attention has been directed in these introductory remarks. I mean that vague, misshapen and as yet indefinite heresy of the passions, which is now springing forth and is daily giving signs of dangerous and increasing vitality. When originally published in France, this work was hailed with general approbation as equally able and opportune. I cannot doubt but that in its new dress it will be received in this country with similar tokens of approval. The translation has been accomplished by one highly competent and in every way qualified for the task. It is not a little difficult to give a good translation of such a work, and yet it will be acknowledged that it has been executed, in this instance, with taste, judgment and fidelity.—These volumes will come to the American reader with pleasing freshness and novelty. They will take their place amongst our standard works of literature, and both the gifted and accomplished translator and the spirited publishers will have merited, and I trust will receive, the sincere thanks and liberal patronage of the Catholic and literary public.

TRANSLATOR'S NOTE.

THE original work, of which the first portion is now offered to the public, consists of four volumes in two parts, published at different times. If the present volumes should receive sufficient encouragement to warrant the undertaking, they will be followed by the two remaining volumes at an early day.

THE SOLUTION OF GREAT PROBLEMS.

CHAPTER I.

WHAT IT IS TO BE A MAN.

To be a man is not to eat, drink and sleep, as so many imagine. The animal does all that, and much better than we. He eats and does not suffer from indigestion; he drinks and never staggers; he sleeps, and the sun always finds his couch empty.

To be a man is not to build houses and cities. Whilst we laboriously arrange the plan of a habitation, the bird constructs one, complete in convenience, solidity and elegance. The prince royal reposes less luxuriously in his gilded apartments, than the young linnet in its aerial palace. The beaver builds large villages and towns, and our engineers admire the perfection of his embankments.

To be a man is not to ascend in space, nor fly over the surface of the earth behind a cloud of smoke. The smallest gnat could instruct our best aeronauts, and surpasses our locomotives in swiftness. He never breaks his neck against a tree, nor is crushed by a fall because he has heedlessly lost his wings.

We must not believe that the arts in themselves give us a real superiority over the animals. Destined to satisfy wants which the animal never experiences, or which he provides for

at a less expense, they are rather a proof of our physical inferiority. Our manufactures will never produce a fabric, equal in durability and beauty to that which covers the sable. There is no animal that would change with us.

In general, as to everything that appertains to the preservation and comfort of the individual, and the species, the animal shows himself better provided, better instructed, and more moral than we.

What is it then that makes us men, and leads us to regard the name of animal as a reproach? Every one answers: it is reason; it is intellect. But is it intellect itself, or the use that is made of it, which places us at an immeasurable distance from the brute? The latter is perfect in its kind, because it is all that it can be: it uses freely the faculties it has received, and never buries any of its talents. If man neglected the sublime gift of intellect, or, what is worse, if he abused it, he would sink beneath the animal. To be a brute, with the power of not being so, is to be more a brute than the brute itself.

We are men then only so far as we are guided by reason, and make use of our intellect.

CHAPTER II.

IN WHAT CONSISTS THE USE OF THE INTELLECT.

THE intellect, being the faculty of discerning truth from falsehood, good from evil, is only made use of, in proportion as we know the truth with regard to the points that are most important to us, and as we conform our conduct to it. Now, what are the things which it is most important for us to know.

Are they the animals that surround us, the plants that we trample under our feet, the stars that roll over our heads? Not at all. Vanity apart, of all the animals which people the round globe, the most interesting, in my opinion, is one-self. I see them all occupied with themselves; why should I not do the same. Before asking what they are, it seems to me natural to know what I am. I say the same of the plants and the stars; I will study them as soon as by a profound study of myself, it shall be demonstrated to me that nature has imposed on me no other task than to watch the stars, or collect herbs and flowers.

The truly important question for me is then this: What am I? Whence do I come? Where am I going? What is the beginning and end of my existence? In fact on this point depends the whole movement of my life. According as I recognise in myself an immortal spirit, or a handful of organized dust, which will be dispersed at the first breath of death, I shall give to my thoughts and actions a very different direction. While I am uncertain what to believe on this subject, I shall be confused, ignorant if I am doing right or wrong, if I advance or recede. Following only the impulse of my appetites, I shall be like the animal, and even in a worse condition. The appetites of the brute regulated by a superior reason are laws, and never cause his destruction. Mine, on the contrary are false and perverse if reason does not correct them. How many men daily perish, the victims of excesses unknown to the brute! Vainly then do I flatter myself that I am a man, vainly do I repudiate the name of animal if I have not found a complete solution to this great question: from whence do I come?

CHAPTER III.

VARIOUS SOLUTIONS.

THE solutions given to this question at the present day may be reduced to four.

From whence does man come? I do not know, and I care not to know, answer the indifferent.

Man, says the pantheist, is one of the innumerable fractions of absolute unity, a modification, a transient form of the great whole.

Man, says the atheist, is the work of nature, the spontaneous production of the earth, a very singular effect of that blind force which animates eternal matter.

Man, says the christian philosopher, is the work of an infinite intelligence and power, which existing alone from all eternity said, at the beginning of time: Let the universe and man be; and the universe and man were.

Of these four solutions, which is the most rational, the most worthy of a man?

CHAPTER IV.

SOLUTION OF THE INDIFFERENT.

Ignorance is generally a thing of which no one boasts. The appellation ignorant is every where esteemed injurious, and synonymous with brute. It is the custom to parry it, in the street by a blow; in the saloons by a sword-thrust. The words, "I do not know," "I am ignorant," which should

be in such common use, seem a foreign language, when we speak of questions however trivial. There are persons from whom one could more easily tear their beard hair by hair, than exact from them expressions so uncouth.

How is it then that these modes of speech, in matters of religion, far from appearing humiliating, have something pleasing in certain literary and scientific illustrations? How is it that a man of talent believes himself disgraced if he is thought to be occupied with religion? Is it because nothing is so popular as religious instruction? But this would be a great weakness. If it is an honor to know what most men are ignorant of, it is stupid to be ignorant of what every one knows.

What! can ignorance be the proof of an elevated mind, the seal of genius! Then let the ass raise his ears, and mount the shield. I salute him king of unbelievers. By no effort is it in the power of man to descend low enough to dispute the palm of ignorance with the brute.

Certainly it is very much amiss to carry the head so high, when the heart is so degraded, when one has so little self-respect as to take no interest in the question: Am I the work of chance or of a superior intelligence? Will the being which thinks in me be consumed by the worm of the sepulchre; or freed from its gross envelope, will it go to take its place among immortal beings? In fact, on what does this strength of mind which goes so far as to stifle reason, rest? On meanness of soul. It has long been said; "The impious will believe nothing, because they aspire to the right of doing everything." If they refuse to examine dogmas, it is because they see the chapter of duties at the end. Leave them the secret of their fortune, permit them certain degrading amusements and you will induce them to believe the most incredible things.

What can be more absurd than this conduct. Will there be no God, because man chooses to doubt his existence?

Will the eternal prisons destined for the despisers of his law be less terrible, because they plunge into them blindfold? At the word hell, the indifferent smile, but is a smile sufficient to overthrow the faith of the human race! Shall one, "I do not believe," founded on ignorance, prevail over the conviction of thousands of men, who have preceded us? For as to the existence of future rewards and punishments, there is, and there never has been, but one voice among men.

The indifferent cannot say; "I am certain that the future life is a chimera." How could they have acquired certainty on a question which they have never examined; especially when the immense majesty of the race affirms the contrary, and gives very good reasons for it.

If they cannot rationally affirm the falseness of religion, it is then possible that religion is true, and hence they reason thus; "It is possible that God, the creator and legislator exists; it is possible that he has imposed on man duties whose observance may one day be recompensed with a divine munificence, and whose transgression on the contrary, will plunge him into eternal misery. It is then possible, that when I leave this life, my affected ignorance of the laws of the great master may deprive me of incalculable happiness, may draw down upon me punishments, of which the sufferings of this life are only a feeble image. Yet it would be weakness of mind to occupy oneself with such a question." Was not Pascal right in saying that there were no terms to characterise so extravagant a creature?

On whatever side we examine indifference to the affairs of religion . . . but I remember there is a book on this subject, and a book so well written that for ten years the author has striven to destroy it. I commend the indifferent to it, and if after having read it, they are still puffed up with vain glory, I must hand them over to the physician.

CHAPTER V.

SOLUTION OF THE PANTHEIST.—WHAT IS PANTHEISM?

IF it were not known that there is no degree of folly too great for pride, when it attempts to escape from God, it would be impossible to conceive how pantheism could find a place in the human mind.

A christian philosopher has said to guilty man: "Do you wish to escape from God? cast yourself into his arms*" The pantheist thinks it best to throw himself into the divine essence. "I am God, a fraction of God," he declares; "how could he strike me, and the blows not rebound upon himself?"

When through various transcendent speculations, an intellect has become sufficiently proof against absurdities to confound its miserable individual existence with the infinite existence; when it has been seriously attempted to form from all intellectual and material unities, the absolute unity; from all successive existences, eternity; from all imperfect, transitory, corruptible beings the incorruptible, immutable, infinite being; when but I see most of my readers yawning, little versed, as it appears, in the pantheistic system, although it is the foundation of all the religious, philosophical, political, literary and artistic errors of our age. Let us endeavor then to explain it, in a few words. In this case, to explain is to refute.

Until recently, all philosophers who, without aversion to God, were studying the origin of the universe, finished by rendering homage to the system, or rather to the fact of the creation: God spoke and everything began to be.—A system so grand, exclaims J. J. Rousseau, so consoling, so sublime, so fitted to elevate the soul, and lay a foundation for virtue

* *Vis fugere à Deo? fuge ad Deum.* (S. Augustin.)

a system so striking, so luminous, so simple ; a system presenting less that is incomprehensible to the human mind, than other systems contain that is absurd !

At that time, it is true, it was no better understood than at present, how infinite power had brought the universe out of nothing ; but this was a fact established by divine testimony, and confirmed by reason, which easily demonstrated the weakness of every other hypothesis. Men believed then in the creation, and did not blush at their belief, supported as it was by these two eminently philosophical axioms ; 1. An infinite intelligence can do many things, which a limited intelligence cannot conceive ; 2. The privilege of believing nothing belongs to the brute.

If reason, which is not naturally very craving of mysteries, persisted in asking how God could create real beings out of possible beings, and how these beings could be from God and by God, without being one with God ; it was answered : “ O Fool, enter into thyself, and thou wilt find phenomena analagous to the creation. Daily thy intellect struck by the idea of an object purely possible, for example, by a discourse, a picture, or a statue, hastens to realise it outwardly by language, the pencil, or the chisel. These objects which exist only through thee, are yet distinct from thee, distinct from the idea of which they are the expression, distinct from the mind that has conceived them, from the will that has freely produced them. After that, wilt thou refuse to believe that the Infinite Being, by the power of His Word, has been able freely to realise some of the beings, conceived by his intelligence, and that these beings are from him, by him, in him, without being him ? ”

This cosmogony was not so bad as is seemed ; but to the eye of pride, which pretends to accomplish everything, it had the capital defect of being completely finished. It must then proceed upon its own foundation, and as the foundation of

pride is folly, the old and foolish theory of *emanation* was substituted for the very rational theory of the creation. It is really an old theory, for it was the first which presented itself to the human mind not illuminated by divine light. In fact, most of the philosophers of antiquity, destitute of the idea, to human reason inscrutable, though so simple, of the creation, believed that beings came forth from the Supreme Being, either by generation, as the child comes forth from the womb of its mother, or by coming to light, as the bird escapes from the egg, or by evolution as the tree springs from the surface of the soil which conceals its germs.

A stupid conception, which gave birth to the monstrous cosmogonies of Egypt, India, and Greece, and which thinking men beyond the Rhine, reproduce at the present day under the name of the science of the absolute, or transcendental philosophy. Heavy as are the clouds behind which Kant and his disciples love to intrench themselves, through their ambitious terminology, we see the folly of the early days always revealed.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THE creative principle, variously named in the ancient cosmogonies, is denominated indifferently, in the schools of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Herder, &c.; the Absolute, the One, the Great Whole, Idea, Being, the Absolute Me, God.

This absolute, eternal, infinite, imperishable, has the idea of himself, but still an idea too confused to permit a full conception. Intensely curious, as might be imagined, to know what he is, and of what value he is, he endeavors to

elucidate and develope this idea, that he may know precisely everything which is contained in his existence. How is this to be done? As we do when we wish to develope an idea which torments us; we strive to give it a form, by placing it on paper in presence of an intellect. If this first sketch fails of rendering our thought we change it, and we continue to erase and write until finding the perfect expression of an idea we can say: "I have succeeded; I have fathomed my thought."

In the same way, God or the Absolute, moved by the desire of knowing himself, is eternally occupied with projecting his thought, by making himself objective to himself, or—to speak transcendently—by placing himself opposite to himself, as not himself. As he is spirit and matter—at least potentially—his intellectual being is displayed in a multitude of intelligences, his material unity is broken up into an infinity of sensible substances.

What is the universe according to this system? It is a divine evolution, an act by which the Absolute unfolds himself, displays himself to the eye of his intelligence that he may describe himself to himself.

Men are not, as they have hitherto had the simplicity to believe, individuals, really enjoying their personal existence. Their spirit is only one of the manifold forms of the infinite spirit; their body like all bodies only a mere modification of universal matter. In a word, the human race, animals, vegetables, minerals, all various transformations of the divine essence are only forms in which God seeks to contemplate himself, and to study his own nature.

Unfortunately these formulas, being the fruit of a first essay, are incomplete, and fail of rendering worthily the divine thought. Hence, we see in the eternal author, a continual effort to modify and perfect his theme. The incessant revolutions of the moral and physical world have no other

aim than to establish the supremacy of the idea, by disengaging it from its ancient forms, and carrying it out to its fullest manifestation. If these operations are tedious and painful, if sometimes God, in order to erase more quickly a page which displeases him, casts on it some drops of human blood, let us not weep like men of weaker minds.

All violent destruction is progress. When God erases so suddenly an ill-sounding phrase, it is to write a better one. Who knows if this may not be the last; if the divine idea, having completely given form to itself, the God—Universe may not remain eternally fixed in ecstatic self-contemplation?

It is true that, if before this happy epoch, the guillotine, the bullet, or inability to live longer annihilates our present existence, it is not easy to see how we can participate in the felicity of the Great Whole: but away with selfishness! Humanity will then subsist in our descendants, who, thanks to the perfection of their intellect, which reflects the idea of the Absolute, will be preserved with the same care that we give to the learned pages on which our thoughts are worthily recorded!*

This is the fundamental theory of the modern pantheist, or of the *transcendental* and progressive philosophy, under whatever form or name it presents. I would call upon all those who like myself, have had the patience and courage to pursue this hideous phantom through the obscurity in which it conceals itself, to decide if I have been faithful in the sketch I have made of it.

* Yet this is not entirely certain. It is possible that God, after having perused his formula enough to impress on his memory the consciousness of his own existence, may use it as authors often use their manuscripts as soon as they have obtained the honor of being printed. And is not this the fatal termination which the transcendental philosophy seems to prophesy, when it announces in oracular style that "the absolute after having displayed himself in manifold forms retires towards Unity, and tends to re-establish himself in Unity?"

If I am now asked how this horrible folly has found in Germany and elsewhere so many partisans, in most of whom we must acknowledge a rare degree of talent and information, I shall give two reasons.

The first is entirely a christian reason. When a man, reared in the bosom of evangelical light, dares in his pride to reject the simple and sublime philosophy that Jesus Christ came to teach us, at the price of his blood; the spirit of God departs from his guilty heart, and the demon of brutality is summoned to rule there, by virtue of this divine law: *Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled.*

These are the archangels of the Catholic hosts, whose fall still makes our hearts bleed. In the filthy mire where they grovel after they have lost the wings of faith, they exhaust our pity, as they have before exhausted our admiration. On their pages which we should think written by the light of the infernal gulfs, what do we see? A profusion of absurdities, which hold the reader perpetually suspended between indignation and contempt.

The second reason for the success of the pantheistic doctrines, demands an entire chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

MORAL SIDE OF PANTHEISM.

EXCEPT in the case of organic disease, man does not play the fool unless he is freed from responsibility with regard to the consequences of it. We naturally love truth; the heart must be fully recompensed for the violence done to reason, before it can yield itself captive to error.

If a system is fruitful of immoral consequences, if it gives

the reins to all the passions, its fortune is made, even if it contains in its principles an infinity of absurdities. Those whose intellect is on a level with their stomach, will adopt results without troubling themselves very much about the premises. "This system is convenient," they will say, "it is of little importance to us whether it be true or not." Those who pride themselves on reasoning upon morals, will say, "This theory charms the feelings, why does it not agree with reason?" and the union will take place very quickly; for reason closes her eyes when she lends an ear to the appeals of feeling.

Now nothing is so flexible as the morality of pantheism. To make man a portion of the great whole, without personality, is to free him from the responsibility of his actions, to deify all the extravagancies that flit across his mind, and all the desires of his heart, however monstrous they may be.

What the ignorant man calls a vice, an evil, a crime, an execrable offence, is, in this system always a good; for in one way or another it turns to the profit of the whole. Thus a transcendental philosopher would be very much embarrassed if he were asked whether Vincent de Paul or Robespierre deserved the most from the human race.

The Absolute needing action and movement in order to evolve himself, it is for us to second him in the best way we can, and labor with energy to destroy what is, and to produce what is not.

Are you born with a mind inclined to vast and profound meditations. This is the religious, philosophical, or political *idea* seeking in you new manifestations. Set at naught the superannuated theories, which hitherto have ruled the minds of men. Let us have the unknown, and let meaner souls cry absurd.

Are you gifted with a genius for poetry and the fine arts? This is the *idea* that demands of you an unknown form.

Even if this form violates all the rules of beauty, and outrages modesty beyond measure, it is of little importance: do not refuse the divine inspiration.

Are you in a situation from your social position to impress a great movement on the political machine? Do not hesitate to do so, even should the machine break and bury twenty millions of men under its ruins. If its victims curse you; humanity, which has advanced a step, will bless you.

You too, whose activity is limited to the narrow circle of the family; the life of the Great Whole seeks also its manifestation in you, through the insatiable appetites of the heart. Devote yourself to satisfying them by the energetic development of your faculties. Answer boldly like the crusaders to him who would array against you the rules of morality. "It is the will of God!" It is true that the penal code still dares to put limits to your independence, but unite your voices to those which arise on every side against this barbarous act, and the sword will fall from the hand of justice, as soon as public opinion recognizes in crime only the tragic explosion of the *idea*.

I defy all the worthless libertines in the universe, united in a general company, under the direction of Satan in person, to form a code of more complete licentiousness.

Many honest progressive persons, I know, do not wish for these consequences. They are charmed, in the new philosophy, by something grand and colossal which it presents at first to the dazzled mind, by the fanciful unity which it promises to science, and above all by the facility it gives to praise everything, and approve everything in matters of religion, without imposing the obligation of practising anything. In fact the different religions which have divided, and still divide the world, being formulas, more or less successful, of the *idea*, there is none that has not contributed to progress, and which does not claim a share of our homage; but all

of them maintaining their ascendancy over the *idea*, none has a right to impose upon us its dogmas, or subject us to its laws and precepts.

Catholicism, no doubt, has more nearly attained its end; hence its long and wonderfully prolific existence. Its worship and its monuments still breathe forth something of the infinite; yet its dogmatic formulas, and moral laws are far from the *idea*. What soul is so little elevated, that it does not feel the need of a religion, more ideal, more free from terrestrial clogs and more transcendental! The ministers of the old worship may still preach to us the love of God and man; respect for the life and even the property of our brethren; this is very well; but who in our day would submit himself to the law of confession, fasting and abstinence! Who believes himself guilty if he has not restrained his eye or his heart in the presence of beauty! In short who would be willing, in the nineteenth century to be a christian after the manner of the tenth!

These, fashionable friends of progress, are the decent limits you intend to prescribe to the practical consequences of your doctrines. But if they are sufficient for you, for you who can satisfy the appetites of the heart without committing robbery or assassination, they are not sufficient for that immense multitude who can only expect in return for their fidelity to social duties, a morsel of bread steeped in sweat. The subtle and inflexible logic of the passions will certainly reveal to them what you vainly attempt to conceal in your principles; that moral constraint is folly; criminality a ridiculous fiction, and public prosecution an atrocity; that our sole duty is to use life generously, and that our liberty has no other rule than the length and power of our arms.

Make this beautiful morality popular, and your Absolute will soon begin to inscribe himself so illegibly; will blot his characters so often with our blood, that in less than a cen-

ture the nine millions of fractions of his divine being, which are disporting themselves now on the surface of the globe, will be re-established in unity—the unity of death.

The pantheistic system then is as execrable in practice as it is stupid in theory. Consequently the solution it gives to this question: “From whence comes man?” is unworthy of a man, unless reason and moral sense are no longer integral parts of man in the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOLUTION OF ATHEISM.

If the atheist is right, the human race is wrong, and nothing but incorrigible folly is to be seen in the infinite number of nations who have covered and still cover our planet; for all of them from the most civilized to the most savage, have recognized a God.

To escape so overwhelming an argument, what has atheism not done? After having in vain ransacked both hemispheres to discover a nation without a God; it concluded to organize one. The commencement of this extravagance belonged by right to the country of great discoveries. But if it needed an Englishman to conceive such a project, for the execution of it the New World was necessary.

Robert Owen then assembled, nearly twenty years since, seven or eight hundred individuals male and female, strong enough in atheism to believe that they would not transmit to their children the idea of God.

He led them to the United States, chose for them an extensive domain, traced the plan of a little city which he called New-Harmony; then he made them promise to remain

faithful to the laws of their mother nature alone, expecting them however to cultivate the arts of industry and to preserve the habit of walking on two feet, that no one might doubt their human extraction. He recommended to them particularly to abolish the *mine* and *thine*, to banish forever from their lips and hearts the name of a superior being; by which means he promised them, on the faith of an atheist, that they and their little ones should rise to such a degree of felicity, that the astonished universe would finally renounce religion, marriage, and private property, *the most horrible trinity of scourges that can afflict mankind.**

The event failed of justifying these fair hopes. Whether contagious disease, or some other scourge not comprehended in the *horrible trinity*, ruined the band at New-Harmony—we no longer hear of it, and the man who assembled them, at so great a cost, returned to England.

This experience was not needed however to prove that atheists multiply by inoculation, and not by generation. The operation is very simple: it is only to blacken the conscience to such an extent, that it cannot behold itself without exclaiming: “Wo is me, if there be a God!”

The receipt it is true never radically takes effect. There are many circumstances in life, in which an atheist of this kind is carried away by the universal prejudice.—Vauvini, at the sight of the funeral pile exclaimed; “Oh God!” Volney, in peril of his life, on the coasts of America, seized a rosary, and proved, while the storm lasted, that he knew his Pater and his Ave.—Cabanis, who swore by his head, in the presence of the whole academy, that there was no God, and threatened to draw the sword against any one who should

* These are the words of Robert Owen, in his *Declaration of Mental Independence*, a discourse delivered at New Harmony, July 4th, 1826, the fifty-first year of American Independence. This singular document is found entire in le *Mémorial Catholique*, vol. 7th, page 149.

affirm the contrary, Cabanis yet avowed that atheism is *con-
sary to direct, inevitable, daily impressions, to the constant
and universal utterance of all nature.**

Let it be acknowledged to the credit of the brutes, that
natural, calm, imperturbable atheism is only found among
them. The man who adopts their mode of living, may ape
their irreligion, so long as he leads a joyous life :

Mais, au moindre revers funeste,
Le masque tombe, l'homme reste,
Et la brute s'évancuit.†

The learned men of the last century gave an undue import-
ance to atheism by treating it as a serious malady. The num-
ber of atheists was increased, by the works destined to refute
them; to reduce these minds puffed up by pride, powerful
purgatives should have been employed, such as large doses of
contempt and ridicule, and not the cold preparations of science.

All the blows inflicted by the Herculean club of the Sor-
bonne are not so effectual as the box on the ear of a cele-
brated unbeliever, given by the hand of beauty. After having
in vain preached to a circle of ladies; he attempted to
revenge himself, by saying, "Pardon my error, ladies, I did
not imagine that in a house where wit vies with grace, I
alone should have the honor of not believing in God."
"You are not alone, Sir," answered the mistress of the man-
sion; "my horses, my dog, my cat share this honor with
you: only these poor brutes have the good sense not to
boast of it."

* See his *Letter on First Causes*, published by M. Bérard. What
do these words signify, if not that the sincere atheist avoids what is
inimitable, that he never experiences what other men daily experi-
ence, and that, by his insensibility to the universal and constant cry
of all nature, he is the most unnatural of all beings?

† "But at the least reverse, the mask falls,
Man remains, and the brute disappears."

CHAPTER IX.

ONE PROOF AMONG A THOUSAND, THAT THE ATHEIST IS
THE MOST IMPUDENT OF LIARS.

If I were asked the question : " Are there real atheists ? " I should answer boldly, among animals, certainly ; but not among men. There have indeed been, and there still are persons impudent enough to say and even to write that man is the work of chance ; a spontaneous production of nature, &c. ; that there are any stupid enough to believe it is impossible.

What would be thought of one who in presence of the Apollo Belvidere, or any other master-piece of art, should seriously say ; " This is a singular accident of nature ! What a succession of fortunate accidents must have been required to impress on this marble a form so divinely human ! " You would refuse to believe such extraordinary folly possible ; but he who attributes our existence to chance is a thousand times more foolish.

There is incomparably more intelligence in the formation, I do not say of our body, but of a single hair of our head, than in the Apollo, and the other statues of the Belvidere. We have a hundred artists in Europe capable of transforming, more or less successfully, a block of marble into an Apollo ; but who can make a hair ! Nature furnishes us in abundance with the nine substances which analysis has discovered in this delicate thread ; it only remains to combine them, but that surpasses all human capacity. What does this prove ? that we have as many demonstrations of an intelligence superior to man, as there are hairs upon our heads.

Where is there a brain diseased enough to imagine that a

piece of cloth is the work of blind force? that, for example, a blast of wind has blown the bark from the cotton plant, or some tufts of wool from the sheep's back; that another blast has converted these fragments into thread; that a third has woven them with so much skill and method, &c.! Now this man would be much less absurd, than the atheist, who sees only chance in the tissue of our skin; wonderful covering, closely woven enough to retain the blood, open enough to give passage to the secretions, soft enough to gratify the touch, strong enough to resist perpetual friction, sufficiently transparent to display the most beautiful colors, and sufficiently opaque to conceal from the eye the red flesh that it covers.

Let a skilful scalpel raise this envelope, and unfold to our astonished eye the wonders of the human organization. At the display of this divine miniature, where the innumerable combinations which are so conspicuous in the structure of the universe are reproduced in indescribable perfection, who is so mad as to dare to utter the word chance!

The prodigious skill that is perceptible in it even to the naked eye, caused an ancient anatomist to say; "Give me a dead dog and I will make him bark against Epicurus." What would he have said, if the microscope had enabled him to see in one fibre alone, as much wisdom as in the mechanism of the whole!" "Give me the tongue of an atheist," said a modern religious anatomist, "and I will find in it a thousand undeniable proofs that it is a bold liar."

From the state of minute dust, in which analysis shows us the elements of our body, to the perfect organization, where the phenomena of life are displayed, what an incalculable succession of profound combinations!

How many combinations in order to raise inorganic particles of dust, mostly dissimilar, to the fibrous state!—How many combinations to form from fibres the fifteen or sixteen

different tissues recognized by anatomists!—How many combinations to form from these tissues myriads of organs, each having its own action!* How many combinations to distribute the organs for the formation of the varied mechanism necessary to the vital functions!—How many combinations to compose from such a variety of organs, a single one endowed with life!

To the mad man who dares to attribute this master-piece of intelligence to the blind forces of nature, I would say; “Chemistry reveals to us the different elements of the human body; collect them in as large a quantity as you please, and in the proportions given by analysis; submit them to the successive or simultaneous action of all the natural agents; and we shall see if blind nature, aided by the lights of human science, will succeed in fusing, crystallising, or forcing to germination, I will not say a human body, I will not say the least complicated of the tissues which enter into its formation (the osseous tissue), I will not say even only a single one of the two hundred and forty-two pieces of which a skeleton is composed, but only one ounce of osseous substance.

The chemical composition alone of osseous matter, requiring at least eighty-seven combinations or proportions, it would be necessary that the agent charged with the undertaking should conform to these combinations, and avoid the innumerable errors which might derange them; which would really be a miracle in a blind man.

The osseous substance being given, it must necessarily receive the form of a human bone; for instance, of a vertebra. Now, in the construction of a vertebra there are at

* Yes, myriads of organs! Follow, lens in hand, the innumerable ramifications of the nervous, arterial, and venous systems, particularly in the mechanism of the brain: consider the blood vessels of so astonishing a delicacy, that united they present to the eye only an inorganic mass, and then tell me if I exaggerate.

least three hundred and fifteen things necessary, to which your blind man must pay attention.* The vertebra formed, it will be necessary to find its twenty-three sisters; and they must not be moulded upon the first, for nearly all differ; and this makes new combinations necessary for each vertebra.

The vertebral column being established, it will be required to adapt to it the two hundred and eighteen bones, which are yet wanting to form a complete skeleton. I have been moderate enough in the calculation of the combinations which one single piece of the osseous system contains, to be permitted to affirm that the composition and configuration of each of the other two hundred and forty-one, demand as many; which supposes in the formation of the skeleton, ninety-seven thousand, two hundred and eighty-four combinations. Let it be observed that among the countless millions of possible combinations, whether in the two hundred and forty-two bones, whether among the different elements of which each is composed, there is but one that is adapted to the human organization; there are then a million of chances to one that your blind man will miss it. Let us suppose that he finds it, after an infinite number of unsuccessful experiments, which will have covered the globe with the fragments of imperfect skeletons. We shall have a skeleton; but what prodigious labor remains, in order to give to this hideous carcase, externally, the exquisite harmony of the human form; internally, the infinite variety of organs necessary to perform the functions of life! Is not this enough?

What is the human body? It is an immeasurable harmony; it is a perfect unity, resulting from infinite variety; it is, then, the consummate work of an unbounded intelligence; it is the infinite protest against chance.

* Galen taught that "among the two hundred bones which form the human body, there is none which has not more than forty uses."

CHAPTER X.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.

IF a lifeless body is sufficient to confound an atheist, what may not be done with a living one?

What is life? The greatest philosophers answer confusedly, and are incompetent to meet this question. Life considered in its second causes and its effects, consists of innumerable simultaneous actions, all conspiring towards the support of our organization.

What is the secret principle that puts in play these innumerable wheels, and orders so many unequal motions, for the production of a singular phenomenon? The soul? If it is this that works such wonders, let her explain them.

Let her teach us, for example, how she transforms food into chyle, chyle into blood; how she forces the blood to the extremities through the arteries, and brings it back to the heart through the veins; she who, before the experiments of Harvey, obstinately denied the circulation of this fluid. All this process is going on with her, without her, and even in spite of her.

As to the movements which her will commands; does the soul intervene in them except as a blind instrument, which knows not what it does? Does she really know what springs must be touched, in order to open the eye or shut it, to raise the arm, protrude the foot, utter a cry, or articulate a word?

Who does not see that life is a divine phenomenon. It is not we who live, it is God who lives in us.* To the reflecting mind, every pulsation of an artery is an irrefragable proof

* Cum ipse (Deus) det omnibus vitam, inspirationem, et omnia.
 . . . In ipso enim vivimus, et movemur et sumus. (Act. xvii. 25, 28.)

of a being intelligent enough to comprehend the immense mechanism of life, and powerful enough to keep it in action.

We have considered man alone, and only the material nature in man. The prodigies of wisdom and of power that we discover in him, zoology could show us in its countless myriads of living beings which animate the globe, from the enormous elephant, to the caterpillar that gnaws the wood of the willow; and from this caterpillar, in which Lyonnet has counted four thousand divine intentions,* to the infusory animalcule whose existence, organization, habits and instincts, have been revealed to us by the microscope of Spallanzani. We should find these prodigies in the innumerable family of vegetables, from the giant cedar to the mould of the cheese which appears upon our tables.

What a chain of harmonies bind the animals to each other; animals to vegetables; vegetables to minerals! What tender care for the preservation of the weaker species, through the duration of ages, in the midst of so many causes of destruction! Every day witnesses the ruin of the colossal structures of Egypt; but the grasses which carpet the banks of the Nile are to-day what they were in the time of the Pharaohs; and the same insects which tormented the builders of the pyramids are still buzzing around those monuments.

After this will it be necessary to call to our aid the superior worlds, to assail the atheist with what scripture calls the hosts of heaven? An immense army, whose wonderful evolutions through the plains of space, whose fires so steady and so resplendent, publish night and day the genius and power of the Supreme Ruler.

* See his *Anatomical Treatise* on this insect. The conchology of fossils offers us wonders still more astonishing in the twenty-six thousand little bones of the *zoephytes moniliform*, in the hundred and fifty thousand osseous pieces, and the three hundred fibrous vessels serving as muscles to the *coral briareus*. V. Jehan. *Nouveau Traité des Sciences Geologiques*, Etude 5^e, p. 125.

Shall we raise statues to Kepler, Copernicus, and Newton, and dignify with the epithet of sublime geniuses, these wise men who have detected some secret of the celestial motions; and can the cause of a system so complicated be only a blind force?

In short, can that human intelligence which alone here below thinks, reflects, and submits to calculation the laws of nature, and rises above the senses to transport itself into the past, and plunge into the future; can this be the work of chance? Is it to blind and inert matter that it owes its intelligence, its activity? Is it fatal necessity that has endowed it with liberty?

“That which does not think, could it have made thought?”

CHAPTER XI.

CHRISTIAN SOLUTION.

It is then certainly true, as the Christian affirms it to be, that there is an intelligence governing man and the universe.* But is it creative? Let us see. In the first place, God is so necessary to arrange matter, that it is very natural to suppose that he created it, rather than to affirm that he has built on the foundation of another, and with materials that did not

* And an intelligence distinct from human intelligence; for the pantheist who recognizes no other intelligence than that which is broken up and divided among men, is quite as inconsistent as the atheist, and more supremely ridiculous. He who tells us that the world exists and moves on by its own power, shocks indeed the reason; but he who says to us, “It is human intelligence and power which has produced and governed the universe,” so violently outrages human consciousness, that he awakens derision rather than anger. Is

belong to him : which would truly be a very delicate affair. When in our bodies or in the universe, the workmanship is superior to the material ; to allow the one, and refuse the other, is folly and meanness.

In short, if God has not created matter, it is eternal and necessary ; and hence, whoever is not a total stranger to the first principles of metaphysics, finds himself exposed to inevitable absurdities.

I. If matter is necessary, its fundamental principle implies the idea of existence. It would then be impossible to imagine it as not existing, either in its totaliity, or in the least of its parts. This proposition—*the mites that devour the cheese could not exist*, would shock good sense as much as this—*the circle might be square*.

II. If matter necessarily existed, its modifications, without which we cannot conceive of it, would be as necessary and as immutable as its essence, since they would exist in virtue of the same principle. Hence this process of life and death, which is constantly changing the physiognomy of the world, would be a shocking contradiction.*

it possible that the human mind has established, and still preserves in operation the innumerable laws of the universe, when, after six thousand years of controversy, observation and reasoning, it has not succeeded in arriving at the comprehension of one of them! Does this human power give life and motion to everything that breathes, and direct the superior worlds in their immense orbits, when it cannot add a hair to our head, or a minute to our life. This is the lowest degree of humbly, and I imagine that ignorance borne on by pride never surpasses it. If the number of members of the order is so great, it is because the statutes of the order are not known. Some skilful pen should reveal them; the accusation of Spinosism, Kantism, or Salva-derism, would then become so disgraceful, that the most phlegmatic man would wish to wash it out with his blood.

* Whoever forms to himself a just idea of the necessary Being, finds in the fall of a leaf, in the formation or death of an insect, an evident demonstration of the contingency of matter.

III. If matter were eternal the revolutions of matter would be also eternal; and as each of its revolutions can be expressed by unity we should be obliged to accept the strange absurdity of an actually infinite series of finite unities.

IV. The necessary Being is evidently the absolute being, the source even of being, the most perfect of beings; for as nothing could exist without Him, all the perfections that he did not possess, would be impossible and unattainable. Now who would attribute to matter, I will not say all perfections, but only those which we find in ourselves, life, feeling, intelligence, liberty! There have been philosophers so stupid as to question whether organization could not impart to matter the faculty of thinking (Locke); but I do not know that there have been any stupid enough to say that matter is essentially, and sovereignly intelligent, and that there is at least as much intellectual power in a pebble as in the brain of a Newton.

What do the advocates of the eternity of matter answer to these and a multitude of other absurdities which flow from the materialistic principle? Let us listen to the most celebrated materialist of the age, Broussais, while making his profession of faith in presence of this *nothing*, in which he believed himself about to be swallowed up. "I feel, as many others, that an intelligence has ordered everything; but can I conclude from this that it has created everything? I cannot, because experience furnishes me with no representation of an absolute creation No matter how frequently it is said to me, "Nature cannot have created itself; then an intelligent power must have done it." I answer: "yes; but I can form no idea of this power. I retain then the sentiment of a ruling intelligence, which I dare not call creative, although it should be so." *

* *Développement de mon opinion et expression de ma foi*, in the Historical Notice of M. Broussais, published by M. H. de Montégny. The following is not a less remarkable specimen of the logic of M.

Is not this evidence overwhelming! In the course of his varied experience, Broussais never saw an atom come forth from nothing, he never encountered in his path the creative power; and consequently could not represent it, nor make an image of it to himself.* How could this power then exist?

Yet M. Broussais should have told us how he perceived the ruling intelligence, and what idea he found in it. It cannot be that the creative power is inodorous; and yet with so fine a sense M. Broussais should have scented it; perhaps he has not approached sufficiently near!

We here see to what excess of folly atheists are led. When we would sift their miserable sophisms, they never fail

Broussais: "I fear nothing, and hope nothing from another life; for I cannot represent it to myself." (ibid.) This is the reasoning of a convict, who, refusing to sign an appeal, the success of which was entirely certain, should answer to the solicitations of his defenders and friends: "Gentlemen, I have never been guillotined; I have never been present at an execution; I have never seen a guillotine, and I cannot imagine one. I therefore have a conviction that it is a chimera. It is impossible for me to share your alarm." It is, in truth, a great honor for religion to count such forcible reasoners among its most learned despisers.

* When Broussais said that he could not form an idea of the creative power, he no doubt meant a sensible idea (an image) and not an intellectual idea; for since he speaks of the creation, he must really have an idea of it, and attach a meaning to this word, under pain of acknowledging that he does not know what he says. The idea, or rather the notion of creation, includes the idea of *being*, of *not being*, and the *passage from one to the other*. To say that these three ideas are inaccessible to the human mind, would be to deny the existence of every idea whatever. This notion is so familiar, that it is found everywhere, even in fairy tales. It is true we do not seize it in all its depth; but

"Pour conserver à fond la puissance suprême,

Il n'y a qu'un moyen . . . il faut être elle-même."

To conceive completely the Supreme power, there is but one means
we must be it.

to say to us: "Show us God; tell us what form he has; let us see paradise and hell, and we will believe."*

We should answer them; "Since you are unable to see anything that does not fall under the senses, choose between the forest and the stable, the necessary abodes of creatures without reason.†"

This is what is called an argument *ad canem*.

CHAPTER XII.

CONTINUATION.—METAPHYSICAL PROOFS.—PROOFS FROM FEELING.

IF there is not an atom in the material Universe which does not proclaim a creative and regulating power, there is not a fact of the intellectual and moral order which does not present the same truth to the meditative mind.

* Such, in fact, were the assertions of the atheists of the Institute to Bernardin de St. Pierre. Let us quote M. Aimé Martin. "At the first words of his solemn declaration of his religious principles, a cry of fury rose from all parts of the hall. Some hissed him, asking where he had seen God, and what figure he had; others were indignant at his credulity; the calmest addressed to him contemptuous words. From sport they proceeded to insults: they insulted his old age, they treated him as a weak and superstitious man, they threatened to drive him from an assembly of which he was unworthy, and their madness was carried so far as to challenge him to fight, that they might prove to him, sword in hand, that there was no God. He endeavored in vain, in the midst of the tumult, to utter a word; they refused to hear him, and the idealist Cabanis, (he is the only one we shall name,) beside himself with anger, cried—'I swear that there is no God! and I beg that his name may never be pronounced in this place.'"—*Essai sur la vie de Bernardin de Saint Pierre*.

† Reason is really the faculty of seeing what the senses do not see. My dog visits with me the triumphal arch de l'Etoile, the Tuilleries,

But we must not dwell on this subject. The age of progress is too unfriendly to the metaphysical world. As there are no mines of gold, silver, copper, or even coal to be found in it, it is forgotten entirely. Let us address a few words to these solitary travellers who are still winding their way through it, and then resume our humble rout.

I. The finite, the imperfect, exists; how can the infinite, the perfect then, not exist! Could perfection, that is to say *being*, be a reason for not being!

II. We have the idea of infinite perfection: * it exists then; if it were not, we could have no idea of it.

III. God is possible, by the avowal even of the atheist: then he exists; for the idea of him implies the idea of existence; it is impossible to conceive of him as non-existing.

IV. What is understood by God? The Supreme Being, the being of beings, he who alone can say—*I am He who is*. To deny the existence of this being, is to say—*He who is, is not!*

V. Man thinks, and did not create himself; he is then the work of an intelligent being.

VI. Man does not think without speech; he speaks only as he is spoken to. We must then recognize a being who has spoken to man, or created him speaking, &c. &c. &c.

the Louvre, Notre Dame, St. Genevieve, &c.; he sees all that I see, except Napoleon and the grand army, Philibert de Lorme, Perrault, Maurice de Sully, and Soufflet.

* It has been often objected that the idea of the infinite is negative; it has been as often answered that if this word includes a negative (not finite), it is only in the grammatical form, and that in fact it is peculiarly affirmative. What in reality is the finite being, if not the being which has limits, which fails of ulterior perfection? The idea of the finite, although announced under an affirmative form, is then essentially negative. The idea of the infinite, on the contrary, containing the absolute negation of every negation, is the most positive that can be conceived. It is the idea of being, and nothing but being, free from all idea of non-existence. See Fenelon, *Demonstration de l'existence de Dieu*, 2^e. part, ch. 2.—Bossuet, *Elevation*, 2^e. ch.

These principles, attentively considered, appeared so evident to Descartes, Bossuet, Fenelon, Pascal, Malebranche, La Bruyere, Leibnitz, Gerdil, de Maistre, Bonald, &c., that they could not conceive the extravagance of the atheist. "Oh God," cried the eagle of Meaux, "one is lost in such total blindness!"*

The heart also makes its demonstrations, unanswerable demonstrations for every man in whom brutal sensation has not extinguished sentiment.

I shall speak presently of the irresistible tendency of the heart towards the infinite—a tendency still more absurd than incontestible, if the infinite did not exist. At present I shall limit myself to a single fact.

"You cannot deny," I would say to the impious man, "that God has had and still has a multitude of ardent lovers, ready to suffer everything rather than displease him, and whose whole life is one perpetual aspiration towards heaven."

See the young Catholic missionary, tearing himself from the arms of his family and friends, traversing unknown seas, approaching, cross in hand, the cannibals of the forests of America, or the isles of Oceanica; braving every day, in Japan, Corea, Tong-King and Cochin China, tortures of which even the thought makes us shudder. What does he desire? To make his God known and loved, to enkindle all hearts with the fire that consumes him.

See the Sister of Charity at the pillow of the dying; the brother and the sister of the *christian schools* surrounded with half-naked children.

Let us listen to the Trappist, the Chartreux, the Carmelite, the Capuchin, chanting in the depths of midnight, the hymn of love, and only consoling themselves for the length of their exile, by the length of their prayers.

Let us follow the priest to the hospital of fever and

* *Elevation, 1re.*

cholera.—See him by the light of philosophic omnipotence, refusing the word which would save his life, and going to death *as if going to his bridal*.*

Have you never heard the fervent christian on his death-bed, sigh with more ardor after his God, than *the hart for the water-brooks*?—(Ps. xli. 1.)

Could a sentiment so profound, so permanent, so heroic in its effects, exist without a real object? Is non-existence capable of teaching, of moving so powerfully the heart of man!† He is too often led to mistake copper for gold, and to be in love with vanities; but has any one ever been known to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his dearest affections and his life to the pursuit of an absolute chimera!

If the spontaneous movement of the needle is only explained by the presence of the loadstone, how will you who deny the celestial magnet, explain the religious attraction of the human heart, of that heart no less subjected to the love of terrestrial beauty, than iron is to the law of gravity! Show us among your followers, the passionate lover of chance, the devotee of nature, the martyr of nothingness.

This is not all: God is hated. Thanks to the philosophy of the eighteenth century, we have seen what was never seen before, numerous assemblies convulsed at hearing the name of God pronounced. We have seen fanatics shrink before no crime that would annihilate the idea of the Supreme Being.—Can nothingness inspire such hatred! Does not so furious a reaction in the heart of the impious man prove

* The following is the expression of the commissary of September, Viollet, who was appointed to preside over the massacre of a hundred and eighty priests, confined at the Carmelite convent: "I am lost, I am overwhelmed with astonishment, I cannot conceive of it: your priests marched to execution with the same joy, the same as they would have gone to their nuptials." Barruel, *Histoire du clergé pendant la Revolution*, tom. II, p. 97.

† Tantus amor nihili! (*Anti-Lucret.*)

that he feels himself wounded and crushed by the divine presence!

You who wish to see God, behold! You will see him alike in the sweet tears which the thought of him draws from the eyes of the dying just man, and in the rage that foams at the mention of his name, on the lips that deny him.

We now see that the christian alone shows himself a man by the solution he gives to this first question: *Whence do I come?* Let us proceed to the two following questions.

CHAPTER XIII.

VARIOUS SOLUTIONS OF THE TWO QUESTIONS: WHAT AM I? WHERE AM I GOING?

THE materialist answers: "I am matter; a more perfect organization giving me over other animals the advantage of speech and thought. Eager for pleasure, an enemy of suffering, my only duty is to procure the one and avoid the other, till death comes to annihilate my being in the dust of the tomb."

The pantheist answers: "I am one of the innumerable manifestations of the universal being. Like the bubble which rises for an instant on the surface of the sea, I shall soon return to the common mass; to contribute to the life of the Great Whole, by the energetic display of my faculties, is my sole destiny and my sole duty, during my ephemeral existence."

The christian answers: "Man is an intelligence, created in the divine likeness and united to a body. Related to God by his superior faculties, and to visible nature by his bodily organs he is the link destined to unite the material creation

to the Creator. Endowed with prerogatives adapted to his sublime destiny, man was at first happy because he was just and good. His soul, in subjection to God, peaceably ruled his body, and all nature by means of his body. If faithful to the divine law, he had directed the exercise of his faculties to the completion of the divine image, his intellect, progressively enlightened by the rays of divine light, would have passed from the twilight of faith to the brightness of intuition. The mind then being perfectly in harmony with God, would have brought the body into harmony with itself, and nature, united to its head, would have attained the highest degree of life and perfection."

Unhappily man violated the divine precept. The rebellion of the spirit against God, led to the rebellion of the body against the spirit, and that of nature against the entire man. Degraded and unhappy, subject to ignorance, suffering and death, man would have fallen into the lowest degree of abjectness and misery, if God had not resolved to save him by a divine effort!

The Word, by whom all things were made, was chosen to restore all things. Clothed with our miserable nature, *he appeared in the midst of us, full of grace and truth*, and opened to us, by his sacrifice, his doctrine and his example, the way of salvation. To submit the intellect and will to God through faith and love; to subject the flesh to the spirit by the rules of penance; to reconquer, through love of poverty, our superiority over nature by detaching the heart from the unreal good that she offers us, is the object of the evangelical commands, the whole duty of man, the only way which can conduct him to *the kingdom that has been prepared for him from the foundation of the world*.

Which of these three solutions merits the assent of men?

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SOLUTION OF THE MATERIALIST.—IS MAN WHOLLY MATERIAL?

I AM surprised that thinking men can be found, sufficiently calm and masters of their feelings, to refute coolly the extreme absurdity of materialism.

I listen with interest to the honest man who, unaccustomed to reflection, tells me of his doubts with regard to the spirituality of the thinking being; but when a writer, who exalts himself into a public teacher, affirms with an arrogant and decided tone, that thought is a physical secretion which differs from other secretions only—(for example, . . . I dare not finish,)—only by its subtilty, my indignation forces me to throw away the book, and I see only one possible refutation, that is, to go scourge in hand, and take some drops of blood from the presumptuous biped.

What can be said to one who maintains that he is an animal, and whose reasoning ends with this conclusion: "Do you agree with me that I am a brute?" "Sir," I should answer, "you may be excused from giving proof; since it is a personal affair, I will believe it on your word."

Let no one, then, expect from me a detailed refutation of materialism. A few principles will be sufficient for the intelligent reader.

If there is one indisputable fact of human consciousness, it is, that there exists in us a principle of unity, activity, and liberty. It is a fact no less indisputable, that unity, activity and liberty, are incompatible with matter.

The indivisible unity of our thinking being, and consequently its spirituality, is demonstrated both by the testimony, consciousness, and the unity of our intellectual operations.

I. Testimony of consciousness.—I feel that I exist, and that I am distinguished not only from beings external to myself, but even from my own organization. 1st. In fact, the consciousness of individuality, in the first place, is indivisible and invariable. It is not increased with my strength; it is not diminished with it; it is not diminished by the loss of any of my organs, as is evident from the experience of those who have suffered amputation. 2d. This consciousness is not local. It is certain that my personality cannot be referred to the brain, to any special organ, or to the entire organization. 3d. By my consciousness I learn not only my existence, but also my operations; I am conscious that I think, that I reflect, that I will, &c. No one has taught me that I have intelligence and will, and that it is I who think and will, &c.; but if I had not been informed that I had a brain, heart, stomach, arteries, veins, &c., and that these are constantly employed for the support of my body, I should always have been ignorant of it; my consciousness tells me nothing of it.

Is anything more needed to prove that the being revealed by my consciousness, is absolutely distinct from my body! For if my consciousness had its seat in my organization, it would inevitably follow, in the first place, that my personality would have been subjected to all the variations of my material existence. Secondly, it would comprehend all the indivisible particles which compose my physical being, or it would only comprehend one: in the first case, I should become a thousand persons instead of one; in the other, this *myself*, which is so important to me, would be infinitely small, and as imperceptible as the atom which contains it. Thirdly, my personality would give me the consciousness of the cerebral and digestive functions, &c., and would teach me how to rectify my digestion and clarify my blood, as it teaches me how to modify my judgments and enlighten my ideas.

II. Unity of our intellectual operations.—According to the

avowal of the materialist, matter is essentially divisible; it can produce, then, nothing indivisible, for the effect can never be of a different nature from its cause. Now, the operations of the thinking being, such as thought, judgment, and volition, are evidently simple and indivisible.

Activity of the thinking being.—1st. I have the power of thinking, acting, judging, willing, moving my body, and that spontaneously, without any external impulse. Now, matter is passive, and incapable of spontaneous motion. Can organization bestow this faculty? Evidently not. Organization being only a combination of parts among themselves, will never give to the whole what is radically foreign to each part. Every particle of matter being to the faculty of acting as 0 to 1, the combination of a hundred thousand particles will no more give the faculty of acting, than the combination of a hundred thousand zeros will produce unity.

2d. If the principle which perceives, thinks, and wills in me, were the result of organization, my perceptions, my thoughts, my volitions, would be necessarily circumscribed within the limits of my organs.

It would be impossible for me to form within myself a representation so vast as that of the earth and heavens. How could the little image which the luminous rays paint upon the retina, acquire a development disproportioned to its extent? Let the materialist show us a picture larger than its canvass.

It would be impossible for me to conceive of those events which have never reached my senses; for example, to be present at a battle which was fought two thousand years ago. How could the lines which I read, or the sounds which I hear, produce upon my brain and heart the same impression as the sight of the combat.

It would be impossible for me to exercise my thought upon the things that are not, and to foresee the future; still more impossible to rise to considerations and sentiments totally

foreign to my organs ; such as abstract and general truths, the idea of good and evil, of justice and injustice, of the love of virtue, of the infinite, &c.

3d. The thinking being reacts on itself. It not only thinks, but it is conscious that it thinks, it reflects on its thought. Now, this is impossible in a material being. An atom, put in motion, will react on those contiguous to it ; but that it should react on itself, is an absurdity so revolting, that the least fastidious of materialists will find it difficult to receive it.

Liberty of the thinking being.—Matter is blindly submissive to the action of external agents ; it can neither avoid, nor suspend, nor prolong the effects of the impressions that it receives from them. I am not, then, matter ; for next to the consciousness of existence, the most lively sentiment in me is that of liberty. I think, reason, and feel freely. Among different impressions, I can choose one, and attach myself to it in such a manner, that I become insensible to every other, as occurs so often in the phenomenon of *abstraction*, where my mind, exclusively occupied with one object, hears nothing feels nothing, sees nothing that is passing around me.

But a much more singular effect of my liberty is, that in certain cases, I can will the destruction of my body. The fact, alas ! too frequent of suicide, will always continue, according to the principles of materialism, a revolting enigma I shall only give two reasons for it.

1. The most universal, profound, and indestructible determination, in all living beings, is the desire of preservation, the will *to be*. Hence, in animals, the extreme energy with which they repel everything that menaces their existence ; hence, in our own bodies, the violent reaction of the stomach against poisons ; hence, “in the moment of peril, that extraordinary instinct which enables me to discover powers superior to the habitual strength of my organs, resources superior to the ordinary resources of my mind.” How could man evade

this law of nature, if there were not in him a being which can say to the body: "Thou art my enemy, an obstacle to my well-being; die then!"

2. Suicide, in the system of the materialist, would be the reaction of matter against itself; which we have already said implies contradiction.*

What does materialism oppose to demonstrations so numerous and so palpable, of the immateriality of our thinking being. Let us listen to Broussais in *the expression of his faith*.

"As soon as I had learned from surgery that matter, accumulated on the surface of the brain, *destroyed* our faculties, and that the evacuation of this matter permitted them to revive, I could no longer consider them otherwise than as the acts of a living brain, although I neither know what the brain is, nor what life is."

The justice of such an induction can in no way be better understood than by a similar mode of reasoning.—At the battle of ——— a brave officer of my acquaintance, traversing a marsh to meet the enemy more quickly, sunk in the mire with many others, and arrived like a coward, too late. As soon as I discovered that the mud on his legs destroyed his courage, and that to restore it, it was only necessary to disengage them, I could no longer consider valor and intrepidity as anything but the acts of free and unembarrassed legs!

* See de Bonald, *Recherches philosophiques*, tom. 1. ch. 9.—Blaud, *Traité élémentaire de physiologie* tom. 1. ch. 3.

CHAPTER XV.

SOLUTION OF THE MATERIALIST AND PANTHEIST.—IS THE
DESTINY OF MAN LIMITED TO THE PRESENT LIFE?
IDEA OF TRUE HAPPINESS.

LET us at first establish some principles.—Although the actual constitution of the world presents some signs of wrath and severity—for which we shall by and by give the reasons—it is no less evident on that account that the creation is the work of love.

If God has created every thing for his glory,* does not the glory of an infinitely good Being consist in producing happiness? God has not created death; he could not rejoice in the destruction of his creatures.† By calling us into existence, he calls us to share his happiness. If the leaven of death is fermenting in the midst of his work, he has not placed it there.‡

In what consists the happiness of man? It consists in freedom from all evils, produced by his enjoyment of the blessings which are adapted to his nature. In other words, it is the legitimate, complete and harmonious development of all our essential faculties. We will here enter into some details which cannot but satisfy these who love to satisfy their reason.

Man considered in his essential existence, presents himself to us as a system of intellectual and physical faculties,

* *Universa propter semetipsum operatus est Dominus.* (Prov. xvi. 4.)

† *Quoniam Deus mortem non fecit, nec lætatur in perditione viro- rum.* (Sap. i. 13.)

‡ *Creavit enim, ut essent omnia: et sanabiles fecit nationes orbis terrarum: et non est in illis medicamentum exterminii, nec inferorum regnum in terrâ.* (Sap. i. 14.)

subordinate to each other and all employed in unfolding the germ of life which the creator has planted in them.

Every faculty, having its object, naturally tends to unite with it by an act, which is the remote or immediate application of the faculty to its object. This tendency is called desire, inclination, want. An ungratified desire produces suffering, or a painful consciousness of the privation of a necessary good. Privation too long continued causes the destruction of the faculty, or such an injury that it can no longer enter into relations with its object. This is death.* Thus the visual power perishes for want of light, the digestive organs for want of food, and the mind itself deprived of all truth would be as if it were not.

Every faculty then lives, is preserved and perfected only by its legitimate exercise, that is to say, by acts that lead it to the possession of its object. Every act which withdraws it from this object is bad, out of order, injurious. Every act which brings it nearer, is on that account good and in the true order, and increases the vitality, perfection and enjoyment of the faculty. It reaches, in fact, its highest degree of life and perfection when it is perfectly united to its object. All its power then coming into exercise, causes a complete development and full enjoyment of its existence, consequently a cessation of desire, of want; it is in repose.

What we say of each faculty may be applied to man, as a whole. He can be happy only in the total and harmonious development of his essential faculties.† This development

* Death is only, as the Greeks have so well named it (*μορος*) a *division*, that is an absolute and irrevocable divorce between the dead substance and the principle which constituted its life.

† I say essential; for our physical faculties, relating to the preservation of the individual and the species, are evidently accidental and must disappear in the perfect man. *Esca ventri et venter escis. Deus autem et hunc et has destruet.* (1. Cor. vi. 13.) *In resurrectione enim neque nubent, neque nubentur.* (Matt. xxii. 30.)

must extend to all his faculties; for if only one were deprived of its object, there would necessarily be derangement and suffering in a part of his being. This development must take place harmoniously, that is, without violating the natural relations of dependence which exist among our faculties, the unity and perfection of our nature would suffer equally from the exclusive development of our physical or moral powers. In the former case, the intellect would be incapable of governing the organization; in the latter, the organization would be incapable of serving the intellect.

But is not that supreme felicity, which is alone adequate to fill up the vast measure of our desires, a dream of self-love, an imaginary compensation for the woes which we suffer?—If it be a delusion, it is as ancient as man, and I do not believe that he can ever be disabused of it.

Consider human life, either in the individual or in nations; is it anything but an unceasing aspiration towards perfect happiness? To escape all suffering and enjoy every blessing, is the fixed idea of every man who comes into this world. There is no thought which does not flow from this thought, no project, no action which does not tend to realize it.—It is for this that the laborer anticipates the sun in the fields, that the artizan wearies himself in his workshop, that the scholar pines away in the midst of his books, that the soldier braves danger, and the prince assumes the crown, or tramples it beneath his feet.

Take away this powerful motive, and the human race deserts life in a body. Man will consent to exist only on condition of being happy. If he is without the hope of becoming so, he throws aside the useless burden of existence; and suicide is a desperate rush towards happiness.

I would now ask if man has implanted in himself this irresistible tendency to pure and unmingled well-being? Since happiness is the incessant cry of our nature, the only spring

which brings our faculties into play, from whom could we have received the idea, if not from the author of our being.

If it is so, this sentiment cannot deceive us: the error would fall back on God; his wisdom and his goodness would be visibly at fault. Can any thing be imagined more unworthy of the supremely wise and infinitely good Being than to give to the noblest of his creatures a faculty without its object, a tendency without its aim; and to plant despair in his heart, by kindling in it inextinguishable desires. I have then the conviction that this thirst for the highest happiness, which is consuming me, will be one day quenched; if, faithful to the laws of the Creator, I offer no obstacle to the designs of his love. To doubt this, would be to fall into the follies of atheism.

But is the blessed day to shine on this side or the other of the grave?

CHAPTER XVI.

IS TRUE HAPPINESS COMPATIBLE WITH OUR ACTUAL EXISTENCE?

CAN man, during his earthly existence, arrive at that complete development of his being, which, excluding even the shadow of desire and want, would allow him to enjoy the uninterrupted repose of happiness?

Such a question can only be seriously contested by fools. Yet, as I write for every body, it will not be useless to establish some principles suited to facilitate the discussion.

Whatever may be the disagreement of philosophers with regard to the sovereign good, all agree that it must correspond to the fundamental desires of our nature; the desire of

knowing, acting, and enjoying. Knowledge without a cloud, power without weakness, enjoyment exempt from all suffering; these are the three elements of that fountain of life, into which our heart longs to plunge. Is the earth rich and large enough to furnish a laver for each of the nine hundred millions which it contains?

Many persons will refuse to believe that knowledge is the first condition of happiness. Persuaded that thought exists for the advantage of the stomach, they wish for science only in their kitchen, and will willingly join Madame du Deffant in saying, that a good supper is one of the four last ends of man, which makes him forget the three others. There are many circumstances however, in which these poor souls will forget their last end, to gratify a passion still more vehement, the passion for knowledge.

At the very moment when the most vigorous appetite gathers them around a table regally served, if a great tumult, and throngs of people crowding the streets, announce some extraordinary event, no doubt our gastronomers would belie the proverb: *A famished stomach has neither eyes nor ears.*

Who has not experienced, many times in his life, that an intense degree of curiosity stifles the cries of want, soothes the keenest sufferings, and throws the soul into a kind of rapture.

Impelled by an instinctive idea, which is secretly fermenting in the depth of our thoughts, we are all in quest of an object capable of satisfying our immense desire to see and know. This mysterious intellectual aliment, the child seeks in his nurse's tales; the youth in the brilliant dreams of romance; the throng of idle persons in the diversions of the theatre, and the excitements of the political world; the scholar in the sublime meditations of the closet, or the profound investigations of nature.

Vain efforts! The greatest events of earth are too small,

the most profound truths, accessible to our actual means of knowledge, are too superficial to retain us in their contemplation. That spectacle, whose infinite novelty can alone hold the human soul transfixed in an eternal ecstasy, is only offered beyond the tomb. Until death raises the curtain, let us go to the entrance hall of virtue to procure our tickets of admission.

Not content with knowing, man also wishes *to do*. From the boxer in the street, to the men of ambition who dispute upon the steps of the throne, we are all eager for power. There is no one who does not more or less aspire to the honor of throwing the world around him into commotion.

What, however, is more wonderful than our weakness! What power have we in the physical order? Dethroned kings of the earth, we can only, sword in hand, wrest from it a little food for our sustenance, and a tomb. The numberless inventions of art do honor to our genius less than they display our impotence. Should we demand wings of wind or flame, if our cumbrous organization could dart into the air, and fly over the surface of the earth at the will of thought? What would avail iron and saltpetre, if a rock were not a sufficient barrier to the march of the most powerful army?

What a truly frightful disproportion between our wishes and our powers! An instant only was needed by the Pharaohs of Egypt to plan and order the pyramids, but the execution required many centuries, and millions of hands. The material force of the whole globe would be powerless to accomplish what even the most ordinary mind can conceive in a second.

Are we much stronger in the political world? History shows us three or four heroes who did all that man can do; and yet were not their lives, like every other life, a series of betrayed wishes and abortive projects?

The foundations of our political edifice are so weak, that a fly could overthrow them. What is needed to set Europe in

flames, and to crush kingdoms? A venomous insect, who plunges his sting into the last shoot of a royal stem. Rome, under the Emperor Arnulf, was conquered by a hare. Not long since, nations who covered the seas with their fleets, have been seen to retire before a worm half an inch in length.*

There certainly would be reason to amuse ourselves at the expense of great men, if we knew the true cause of their success, and of the great events on account of which honor is paid them. This cause now escapes our observation, on account of its extreme minuteness, but it will be known on the day when all things are made manifest. Perhaps this is the comic episode, designed to temper the terrors of the last scene of the world.

Would it become us then to wish to rule nature, when the small portion of matter united to our soul incessantly resists our most energetic desires? and how can we attempt to impose our will upon others, when we are incapable of governing ourselves?

Our miseries all arise from the disproportion between our feelings and our thoughts, our power and our will. There is no harmony in our being, and no happiness, so long as our heart is unequal to our intellect, and our arms are less extensive than our desires.

Man is consumed, too, by his desire of enjoyment. We only aspire to knowledge that our spirit may intoxicate itself at the delicious sources of truth. We earnestly desire power, only to dethrone suffering, and procure for ourselves durable satisfaction. Yet nothing is more miserable than our enjoyments. The noble pleasures of the intellect are purchased only at the price of the pleasures of the body. What is the privilege, then, of the truly wise and learned? Is it not to know better than any one the extent of our ignorance, and to

* A boring worm, which in 1731 and 1732 was on the point of destroying Zealand, and making the United Provinces tremble for their navy.

be incessantly disgusted by the many follies that are in vogue in the world.*

Sweeter and more profound, without doubt, are the joys of virtue. But who has more reason to lament our weakness and vices, than he who elevates himself to study and combat them! Virtue is a tree with a gigantic trunk; its flower rejoices the earth with its divine perfume; but its fruit is gathered only in heaven.

Lastly, does it belong to sensual delights to satisfy the heart completely? Answer, illustrious voluptuaries, around whom riches and power have collected the most numerous throng of smiles and pleasures. Speak, son of David, thou who so often moistened thy lips with the cup of pleasure, and who withdrew them always in disgust. And thou, Tiberius, inventor of unknown delights! tell us which has suffered most, thyself, drowned in pleasures, or thy numerous victims expiring in tortures; this is a problem which historians have left unsolved.

A divine hand has mingled pain and pleasure.—Sadness lies beneath our joys,† and according to the expression of Montaigne—*pleasure consumes us.*‡

CHAPTER XVII.

WHY CAN WE NOT BE HAPPY IN THIS WORLD?

EVERY good that the earth offers us has three defects, which render it radically powerless to bless mankind. It is limited, and can only be possessed by a few. It is empty, and has

* *Eò quòd in multâ sapientiâ, multa sit indignatio: et qui addit scientiam, addit et laborem.* (Eccle. i. 18.)

† *Extrema gaudii luctus occupat.* (Prov. xiv. 13.)

‡ *Essai*, tom. xi. ch. 20.

never satisfied any one. It is of so short duration, that it is unworthy to excite any attachment.

I. *It is limited.* Since God has bestowed in equal measure the desire for happiness, his will is, that we should all enjoy it equally, and it can only be our own deeds which can abolish or diminish our claims to this divine inheritance. What, however, is more unequal, what more capricious, than the division of the goods of this life? What is the crime of that infant born in the lowest degree of abjectness and misery? What is the merit of another, whose cradle is surrounded by riches and honors? To place happiness in honor, wealth, and pleasure, is to deprive our Father in Heaven of his divinest attribute, impartiality; it is to leave the inheritance of despair to the immense majority of his children, who are condemned to vegetate in the midst of privations, and descend unnoticed into the tomb.

Is it said that man, and not God, is the author of this inequality of conditions. Let us suppose this to be as true, as it really is false;* will you correct men? Will you make all, the nimble and the maimed, agree to move on abreast towards the altar of fortune? Will you oblige the blind goddess to cast an equal lot to each of them? Will you induce that skilful speculator to renounce his daily profit of some thousand francs, because the day-wages of his neighbor the cobbler do not exceed eighty sous; or could you persuade him to share his superfluity with all the scissors grinders in the

* Nothing, in fact, could be more false. The inequality of conditions is the inevitable consequence of the very great inequality of physical and moral power among men. Now this last has all the appearance of a providential fact. Yes, *it is God who has made the small and the great* (Sap. vi. 8.) the author of *Paroles d'un croyant* has ventured to affirm the contrary; "God has made neither small nor great" (ch. vii): he has also suffered the fate of all those who have dared to lift their foot against eternal truth; he has plunged into the depths of the mire of folly, and has been groping therein for the last ten years.

kingdom. You appeal to force; but do you believe that the proletariat to whom you give arms against the rich, will confine himself, in the pillage of the conquered camp, to his rightful share, which is, according to your decision, the thirty-three millionth part of the capital of France? We leave to Saint Simon, La Mennais, and other hair-brained persons of the same class, these magnificent absurdities.

II. *It is visionary.* Let us imagine that a celestial ambassador, charged with the government of the world, should come to fulfil in the midst of us the wishes of St. Simon. By successful industrial reforms, he should diminish half the labor, and double the amount of products. Abundance would prevail throughout the earth. We should have no more poor people; but should we have happy ones? Ask every ancient and modern Cræsus, on whom fortune has showered more honors, riches and pleasures, than any of us could claim in a less partial distribution of the terrestrial treasure. Look at their countenances, is it there that happiness is wont to diffuse its purest joys, its sweetest serenity?

The *communists* all commence with that noble definition of man that a famous animal has given us: *Man is a digestive tube*, (Cabanis); afterwards calculating the produce of six millions of square leagues, they find alimentary matter enough to fill a thousand millions of digestive tubes. Unfortunately this definition is very incomplete. By the side of the digestive faculty, there is, in the tube, another faculty much more exacting, the heart. If a small morsel of bread is sufficient to impose silence on the most greedy stomach, the whole world does not contain enough to pacify the appetite of its neighbor.

No, it is not with a few roods of earth that the immense gulf of human desires can be filled. Of all the demons that torment our race, the demon of hunger is incontestibly the least common, and the least cruel. Is the proof needed?

Among a hundred unhappy persons who commit suicide, hardly one starving person will be found.

III. *It is transitory.* If man could establish true happiness here below, would he long enjoy it? What is this life, then, in which it is proposed that I should find time to be happy? It consists, it can only consist of the present moment; it is that mathematical, evanescent point of time, that separates the past, which is no longer in our power, from the future, whose enjoyment nothing can guarantee to us. It is less than a moment, less than a second; for of the sixty minute portions which compose a second, fifty-nine belong to the past or the future. And it is on this needle's point, under the scythe of death, which is always threatening us, in the presence of awful mysteries, which universal belief leads us to see beyond the tomb, that we are commanded to be happy!

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, THERE MUST BE A LIFE TO COME.

LET it be acknowledged then, that if, after the existence of the Creator, there is a truth demonstrable to the mind and the heart, it is, that in the divine plan the actual world is only the cradle of man, the place of education and trial, where, during his short appearance, he must prepare for the great part which God has designed for him in a superior world.

To deprive man of this belief, to limit his destiny to the sixty or eighty years that are allotted him to vegetate on this miserable planet, is to shock all the perceptions of his intellect, overlook the most powerful tendencies of his heart, and offer violence to the convictions of the human race, which, in all periods, under all latitudes, in all degrees of civilization

and barbarism, has never ceased to proclaim the existence of an eternal abode beyond the narrow passage of the tomb. Let us name this abode as we may, Elysian fields, Paradise or Heaven, it is the same. We cannot deny its existence without denying God, without denying man, without showing that we are far sunk in brutality.

But in what does this happy immortal life consist, which all religious traditions promise to the good man on quitting his terrestrial career.

Read the interminable descriptions of it which the mythologies of different nations give us, from the Vedas of India to the less foolish and filthy pages of the Koran. Everywhere the child man is seen occupied in constructing for himself a paradise, adapted to his ignorance and corruption, and judging of his future life as a child of three years old, judges of the present.

The christian revelation, on the contrary, setting aside these foolish creations of a sensual imagination, warns us at first that the joys of the Celestial City are above all the thoughts of our minds, the feelings of our hearts, and the vain discourse of man.*

It guards us against the fear that heaven resembles earth in some small degree. Consequently, at the outset, biblical writers decline describing to us in detail the state of the blessed. Notwithstanding this very remarkable moderation with regard to a subject, which so often falls under their pen, and which is so tempting to the imagination, they do not omit to give us brilliant hints concerning our future existence; and these hints harmonize so completely with the demands of our heart, that we are led directly to the following result: If all religions have a presentiment of the future state of man, Christianity alone has truly a knowledge of it, because, it is the only one whose mission is to conduct us thither.

* I. Cor. ii. 9.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE FUTURE STATE OF MAN, ACCORDING TO CHRISTIANITY.

WHAT is this future? It is the possession and enjoyment of God himself.* Can a richer satisfaction be offered to the insatiable desires of the human heart!

In fact, what does this heart demand? We have before answered, three things: perfect knowledge, unlimited power, complete enjoyment.

I. *Knowledge*.—If, according to the expression of scripture, our intellect should see the light in the divine light,† would it not be sufficiently enlightened? If we should know God as we are known,‡ what would remain for us to know? If God himself is not weary of admiring his infinite perfections, and the magnificence of his works,§ would not the human mind, admitted to a share in such a spectacle, find a subject of delicious and eternal contemplation?

II. *Power*.—Heaven is everywhere described as a throne, as a kingdom which has been prepared for us from the beginning.|| What is this throne?—that of the Most High.¶ What is this kingdom?—that of God himself, that of the Son of man, to whom all power has been given in heaven, earth, and hell; for, *we* are the heirs of God and joint heirs of Jesus Christ.**

To be elevated to the height where God is, to govern with

* Ego . . . merces tua magna nimis. (Genes. xvi. 1.) Pars mea Deus in æternum. (Ps. lxxii. 26.)

† In lumine tuo videbimus lumen. (Ps. xxxv. 10.)

‡ Tunc autem cognoscam sicut et cognitus sum. (I. Cor. xiii. 12.)

§ Lætabitur Dominus in operibus suis. (Ps. ciii. 51.)

|| St. Matth. xxv. 34.

¶ Qui dixerit; dabo ei sedere mecum in throne meo. (Apoc. iii. 21.)

* Hæredes quidem Dei, cohæredes autem Christo. (Rom. viii. 17.)

him the immensity of worlds, to preside over the destiny of nations and decide their fate,* is not this a sufficiently elevated part to fill, and is there not enough in it to satisfy the most unbridled ambition?

III. *Enjoyment.*—Certainly, if there is anywhere true enjoyment, pleasures made to satisfy the heart without falling upon it, they are the pleasures, the delights that God enjoys. But he wishes to share these ineffable delights with the children of men, he wishes them *to intoxicate themselves at that fountain of joy where he himself drinks.*

I would ask the most fastidious of voluptuaries, is it to be apprehended that there can be weariness at the banquets which the divine architect of worlds arranges, and which have been preparing from the beginning of time!

Notwithstanding the great pretensions of our pride, we have a much too low idea of ourselves. Accustomed to judge of the excellence of our nature only by the gross envelope that incloses it, we scarcely suspect the infinite distance that separates us from merely physical beings. If we were more attentive to the operations of the spirit, if we measured the steps which this internal giant makes even in this life, we should comprehend that the lowest intellect is incomparably greater than the material universe;† perhaps also we should form an idea of the prodigious development which the presence of the Infinite will produce throughout our being. Let us endeavor to give a sketch of it.

* Fulgebunt justi, et tanquam scintillæ in arundinetis discurrent. Judicabunt nationes, et dominabuntur populis. (Sap. iii. 7, 8.)

† Inebriabuntur ab ubertate domus tuæ, et torrente voluptatis tuæ potabis eos. (Ps. xxxv. 9.)

‡ There is no mind so ordinary but it has the knowledge to some extent of material existences and can judge of them; but it never can be known nor judged by them. This, I believe is the reflection of St. Augustine.

Let us recall the state of our intellect at the period when thought was beginning to dawn through the cloud of sensations. What idea had we then of our globe and of the innumerable worlds in the midst of which it appears as a point? Is it not true that the sphere of our thoughts was limited to a few hundred feet. Now that liberal and varied instruction, seconded by reflection, has given us access to the repositories of human knowledge, the range of our thoughts has increased by some thousands of leagues, and a second is sufficient for us to traverse in spirit, distances which escape all calculation. In metaphysical and moral studies the introduction of one new and fruitful idea alone is sufficient to extend suddenly the circle of our thoughts, and make us blush at the weakness of our preceding conceptions.

Now if the feeble rays of truth diffused through this world of darkness expand so astonishingly the mind which is occupied in collecting them, who is able to conceive the expansion of that mind, when infinite, unbounded truth shall be manifested to it, without a veil, without a cloud!

But how will the heart be affected?

If there is anything in the world which the heart craves it is beauty. History is full of the extravagances and crimes caused by this most violent of passions.

Let us imagine a creature uniting in its physical form all the graces which the chisel of Phidias and Praxiteles, or the pencil of Raphael could have embodied. Let us bestow on this body the most expanded and superior intellect, the most generous and tender heart. Let us add to the charms of physical and moral beauty those of birth and rank; in fact we give a sovereign to the world. Let her command prodigies, she will be obeyed. Let her promise her hand to the bravest, millions of men would sacrifice themselves at her feet.

If the heart then is so violently agitated by an earthly

form, what will it experience when it is admitted into the presence of the Creator, of innumerable forms of beauty lavished with divine prodigality throughout the vast extent of the earth and heavens! If an idol of animated clay, coming forth but yesterday in its ugliness from the womb of its mother, and which death to-morrow will sweep into the filth of the tomb, excites such love, how will it be with that ravishing beauty, engendered in the splendors of glory, before the morning star,* and whose eternally blooming youth is protected from the injuries of time! Beauty which unites to the inexhaustible treasures of genius and science, the majesty of an unlimited power; a beauty whose tenderness for man surpasses all thought!† Who can describe the glow of the human heart in contact with this burning concentrated fire of love! Who can measure its wonderful expansion, when folded in the arms of infinite tenderness it hears the words; “Come my well-beloved, I am thine forever!”

Let us finish in the profound language of the apostle of charity; “My well-beloved, we are already the sons of God; but our future glory is yet a mystery; but we know that when God shall appear, we shall be like him; *for we shall see him as he is.*”‡

* Ps. cix. 3.

† This is a very simple reflection made by the wisest of men nearly three thousand years ago. Quorum si specie delectati, deos putaverunt: sciunt quantò his dominator eorum speciosior est. Speciei enim generator hæc omnia constituit. (Sap. xiii. 3.) Blind worshippers of the idols of this world, is it then so difficult to comprehend that the charms which attract you in the creature must be found in a far higher degree in him who has given it being! Do you prefer the evanescent and degrading pleasures that a dying body affords you, to the imperishable joys which await you in the bosom of the Divinity? Is not this madness? What would you think of the youth, who, invited by the most consummate of beauties to sit with her on the first of thrones, should go to solicit in a vile dwelling the horny hand of an octogenarian? His folly, however, would be wisdom, compared to yours.

‡ I. John. iii. 2.

CHAPTER XX.

PARALLEL OF CHRISTIAN PROGRESS WITH PHILOSOPHIC PROGRESS.

FRIENDS of progress, advocates of indefinite perfectibility, what think you? Is not the aim which Christianity assigns to our species sufficiently noble? Does not that progress appear to you sufficiently great and rapid, which in a few years raises a being from the depths of nothingness, to the heights of divine perfection.

Compare with this progress that which you propose to substitute for it, and whose definition you vainly attempt. Show us its direction, its aim. What would you substitute for heaven?

You require centuries to put the humanitarian movement in operation! But to demand ages for human beings whose ordinary life does not exceed thirty-five years, is folly or mockery.—Explain yourselves frankly, do you believe that our personality, our individual self, escapes the shipwreck of death? If it is so, tell us how, having once left this globe, we shall enjoy the fruits of this social perfection, for which you would have us sacrifice our existence.—My question calls forth your compassion, I perceive. In your sublime theories humanity is everything, the individual nothing; our personality is only a temporary form which will soon vanish in the ocean of being.—But tell me then, when you and I and all mortals have lost our existence by losing our individuality, what will become of humanity?

You who build everything out of nothing, take the pen, increase ciphers at your pleasure, then add them and see if you can give us a million.* At least acknowledge that Christi-

* Moreover, these progressive gentlemen must not be too much dis-

anity shows itself less stern, less discouraging to the individual, and that by laboring to save men *one by one*, it understands a little better than you the happiness of humanity.

To develop a great energy of action, to hasten the progress of society, as much as possible, to leave an imperishable name in the memory of his fellow men, is, according to your ideas, the destiny of man, and his whole future. But what would become of society if, to escape the punishment of oblivion, every one took it into his head to enact the great man! Who will make our bread, shoes, garments, hats, and all those trifling articles without which heroes themselves would make but a sorry figure!

Another inconvenience: human glory is so much diminished by division, that by giving each man a share, it would be reduced to nothing. Great names like great mountains, rise only by the depression of every thing that is around them. The elect of the first class, as Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar and Napoleon, appear only at the distances of several ages from each other. Put two or three of them abreast, and the world would be reduced to powder.

Do you in truth offer to our heart, so eager for real joys, the prospect of the idle babbling of posterity around the dust of our tombs! Napoleon, who had employed the arms of Europe for nearly twenty years, in erecting for him a temple of terrestrial immortality, had no sooner cast his eagle glance upon it, during the leisure of his captivity, than he withdrew it in disgust, and summoned a priest to point out to him the path to the christian heaven.

Let it be acknowledged, Christianity is more successful than you, in reconciling the interests of human society with the eternal interests of the individual. It shocks the ardor of

trusted. Since they have found humanity without men, they may be able to find a million, without a thousand times a thousand times one. To such very dexterous persons we have nothing to answer.

ambition by promising the first honors of the celestial city, not to brilliant achievements, but to the accomplishment of the will of our heavenly Father in the post assigned to each, and it does not permit any one to abandon it.* Thus sovereigns and subjects, great and small, rich and poor, masters and servants, are all admitted to the competition for future honors, and if any chances are more favorable than others, they are for those among us who shall have shown themselves here below most modest, most beneficent, most disinterested.

In a word, the assembly to which Christianity invites us, is large enough to permit every one to be at his ease, and in the bosom of the Divinity, envy will never utter these words—"Begone, that I may take your place."†

We may say then, without fearing contradiction, that christianity alone has pointed out to man his true end.

Let us see now if it has shown itself as successful, consistent, and rational in the choice of means, by which it directs him to attain it.

CHAPTER XXI.

HARMONY OF EVANGELICAL MORALITY WITH MAN'S FUTURE CONDITION.

"If thou wilt enter into life," said Jesus Christ, "keep the commandments."

What commandments?—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy

* Unusquisque in quâ vocatione vocatus est, in eâ permaneat. (I. Cor. vii. 20.)

† The following is the beautiful and profound reflection of St. Augustine: *Habemus igitur quâ (Veritas summa) fruamur omnes æqualiter atque communiter: nullæ sunt angustię, nullus in eâ defectus. Omnes amatores suos nullo modo sibi invitos recipit, et omnibus communis est,*

God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind. 'This is the greatest and the first commandment.' And the second is like to this: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

What more just! Since we are destined to live eternally in the society of the Lord our God, how should we employ the present life, which is the novitiate of eternity, if not in making progress in the knowledge and love of him? Since the will of our heavenly Father is, that the children of men should all taste in his bosom the joys of a perfect fraternity,† is it not natural that they should habituate themselves here below to have but one heart and one soul?‡

"On these two commandments hang the whole law and the prophets."§

In fact, it is the love of God which commands us to honor his holy name, and avoid in our thoughts, words, and actions, everything which might wound the respect which is due to him. (Second commandment: Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, &c.)

It is the love of God that leads us to sanctify the day which he has reserved to himself from the seven days of the week, by employing it in worshipping him, laying before him our wants, recalling to our minds the blessings we have received from him, blessings greater than we had looked for. (Third commandment: Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy, &c.)

It is the love of God and of our neighbor which demands et singulis casta est. Nemo alicui dicit: Recede, ut etiam ego accedam: remove manus, ut etiam ego amplectar. Omnes inhærent, ipsam omnes tangunt. Cibus ejus nullâ ex parte discerpitur: nihil de ipsâ bibis quod ego non possim. (*De Lib. arbit.* lib. 11, cap. 14.)

* Matth. xix. 17.—xxii. 34, seqq.

† Ego in eis, et tu in me, ut sint consummati in unum. (John xvii. 23.)

‡ Act. iv. 32.

§ Matth. xxii. 46.

that, of all the race, we should love and honor most those whom our common Father has made use of, to bring us into being, and enable us to enjoy the privileges of social life. (Fourth commandment: Honor thy father and thy mother, &c.)

It is the love of God and of our neighbor that obliges us to regard all men as children of God, as our brothers, and to abstain from everything which could injure their soul or body. (Fifth commandment: Thou shalt not kill, &c.)

It is the love of God and of ourselves, that requires us to respect our soul, created in the divine likeness, and destined to the enjoyment of a superior order, so highly, that we must deny it, with the divinely established exception, the pleasures which would degrade it to a level with the brute. (Sixth and ninth commandments.)

It is the love of God and of our neighbor which requires us to aspire exclusively after the treasures of heaven, and keep our hearts and hands from the temporal goods which Providence has allotted to our brethren. (Seventh and tenth commandments: Thou shalt not steal, &c. Thou shalt not covet, &c.)

Finally, it is the love of God and of our neighbor which forbids us to violate the truth, or wound our brethren, in our thoughts, words or actions. (Eighth commandment: Thou shalt not bear false witness, &c.)

But it was not enough to show man the way of life, it was necessary to reveal to him also the germ of death which he bears within him, and apply the remedy to it.

CHAPTER XXII.

DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIANITY CONCERNING THE ORIGINAL
CORRUPTION OF MAN, EASILY JUSTIFIED.

THAT man is vicious, corrupt and misguided, that he finds every day in the base inclinations of his heart, the traces of deep degradation, is a fact established by our own consciousness and by universal belief. "The fall of degenerate man," as the greatest enemy of Christianity has said, "is the foundation of the theology of all the ancient nations."*

The most celebrated philosophers of antiquity have recognized it. Some, to explain the *punishment* of our birth,† have had recourse to crime committed by our souls in a pre-existent state.‡ Others, accepting the universal tradition, have declared that the human race became corrupt in its head.§

Now this extremely important fact, concerning which pagan traditions and philosophy have only given us fables or opinions, Christianity alone presents in a light more satisfying to reason, when, on the third page of the history of the primitive times, it shows us the representatives of humanity violating the law of the creator, and corrupting in themselves that nature which they were to transmit to us.

I shall not attempt to justify here the history of the fall of the first man, recorded by Moses in the third chapter of Genesis. This narration justifies itself sufficiently, in the eyes of every judicious critic, by its great simplicity and by the cor-

* Voltaire, *Questions sur l'Encyclopédie*.

† Animal cæteris imperaturum à suppliciis vitam auspicatur, unam tantùm ob culpam quia natum est. (*Plin. Hist. natur. lib. vii.*)

‡ Ob aliqua scelera suscepta in vitâ superiore pœnarum luendarum causâ nos esse natos (Cicero, *in Hortensio, apud August, cont. Julian. lib. iv.*)

§ Plato, *in Timeo, in Politic, &c.*

responding testimony of all nations; for all have related this fatal event in their own way, and almost always with its most extraordinary circumstance, the intervention of the serpent.* I would only observe that this page of the sacred writer contains evidently, in germ, the whole Bible. It cannot be rejected without entirely overthrowing the theoretical and historical system of christianity. Now we will examine if it is possible, for reason to dispute the historical truth of christianity.

I shall not undertake to refute in detail the objections of the skeptic against original sin. A few words will suffice to dispel those sophisms, which have their rise in ignorance of the true doctrine of the Church, on this leading article of its faith.

In the first place, it is asked, how man can sin before he comes into being; how can an infinitely just God impute to a child born yesterday, a crime committed six thousand years ago, and in which his will has necessarily no part.

It has been constantly answered to this, that *original* sin must not be confounded with *actual* sin; that the former does not exist in us, as the latter, by a free and personal violation of the divine law, but being inherent in human nature, as it was included in the first man, it has been transmitted to us with that, by the fact of our descent from Adam.

To reconcile this mystery with our reason, so far as is permitted to our ignorance, it is sufficient to establish thoroughly the two following principles.

I. *The first man by sin is placed in a state of death.* As he had life only by his union with God, he could not rebel

* Nothing is better known than the malignant character of the serpent in the mythologies of almost all nations. Humboldt, in his *Vue des Cordilières*, shows us the ancient Mexicans representing the evil genius under the figure of the serpent, conversing with the mother of mankind, &c. tom. i. p. 235.

against him without inflicting death upon himself, which is the *wages of sin*.*

His intellect separated from the primal truth, was covered with darkness; his will, opposed to the love of supreme beauty, became the sport of the vilest appetites; his superior faculties, struck powerless, lost in part at least, their empire over his organization; and material nature, to revenge the outrage committed against its sovereign, refused to obey the felon. In a word, spiritual death, by the fatal divorce of the soul from God; corporal death, by the tendency of the body to separate itself from the soul; external sufferings from the insubordination of nature; such must be the consequence of sin, and the realization of the threat of the Creator: "The day on which thou eatest this fruit thou shalt surely die."†

II. *The child is like its parent.* Let us suppose that in this deplorable state Adam had reproduced himself; is it not natural to believe that he would have communicated to his children what he possessed himself, that is to say a nature subverted, corrupted, struck with death? How could it be otherwise? Could death engender life?

It is then false that we have sinned before coming into being; for we were in Adam by our nature, and it is by our nature, and not by an act of our own will, that we are at birth "children of wrath."‡ It is then without injustice that God detests in us what he finds in us, a soul brutalized by ignoble inclinations, in which he can recognize neither his workmanship nor his likeness. Is it not true that we are all born with a certain aversion to God, that is to say, disposed to love everything except the infinitely good Being? How could God, who necessarily loves himself with an unbounded love, sympathize with us, until the remedy which he has him-

* *Stipendia enim peccati mors.* (Rom. vii. 23.)

† Genes. xi. 17. ‡ *Naturâ filii iræ,* (Ephes. ii. 3.)

self prepared in his mercy, the necessity of which all people have discovered, has banished from our souls that horrible deformity! *

But, can it be explained how a supremely good Being condemns to eternal flames, infants who have died with a stain which they could neither avoid nor efface?

* Two objections might be opposed to this theory of original sin. 1st.—That, according to our principles, every sin would be capable of transmission from parents to children, which is contrary to christian belief. 2d.—That the corruption of nature, or concupiscence, remaining after baptism, cannot be considered as belonging to original sin.

I answer to the first difficulty, that the sin of the first man having struck the human race with death, the sin of his descendants cannot produce the same effect, because a dead body cannot inflict death. Yet as this death is not total, every man can aggravate it in himself, and bequeath to his children more corruption than he has received from his fathers. Experience only confirms too well these words of the wise man: “For children begotten of unlawful beds are witnesses of wickedness against their parents in their trial.” (Sap. iv. 6.)

I answer to the second difficulty, that I do not make the essence of original sin to consist in concupiscence, but in the consent which the will gives to it. This consent exists in the child before baptism, but it is involuntary; and hence the child, without being personally guilty, is in a state of impurity which is revolting to the divine nature. In baptism, the Holy Spirit guides back the will of the child to God, by the infusion of charity, and by that banishes from the soul every thing that is displeasing to divine holiness. If the baptised adult is obedient to the impulses of grace, and resists concupiscence, this last so far from degrading him, only ennobles him in the eyes of God by the victories which it gives him an opportunity of gaining. Does he on the contrary yield to the corruption of his inclinations, sin revives in him, but it is no longer the sin of *nature*, it is *personal* sin, it is *actual*, free, voluntary sin, and consequently, far more criminal and far more deserving of punishment. It may be answered; “According to this hypothesis, the infidel who conquers concupiscence is justified, independently of baptism.” I answer: “Yes, without doubt; if that infidel reinstated his will by an act of perfect charity, he would be sanctified in that case by *the baptism of desire*, which above all things is included implicitly in the love of God.”

We shall refer this question to those dissatisfied theologians who have taken it upon themselves to add to the gospel. As to ourselves, who have no other rule of faith than the Divine word, as catholic tradition has always understood it, we cannot imagine how that terrible sentence of the Judge of the living and the dead: *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, &c. For I was hungry and ye gave me no meat, &c.* can be applied to children who have died without baptism.*

All that the gospel teaches us with regard to their fate, is, that the entrance of the celestial kingdom is forever prohibited to them.† But between the floods of joy which God pours forth over his elect, and the torrents of inexinguishable flames destined for the obstinate despisers of his laws, there are innumerable degrees of happiness and suffering. Would you choose a place for the unfortunate creatures of whom we are speaking, and grant them happiness enough to permit them to regard existence as a blessing, and give thanks to the God of all consolation? Religion permits us this, the ideas that it gives us of the divine benevolence invite us to it, and its greatest teachers authorize us in it.‡

Will it be asked again, Why God has chosen to place the destinies of all, in the hands of one man alone? This is an impertinent question, which would bring a rash censure to bear upon all the principles of divine government. Why this law of the social world, which places the existence of a vast empire in the hands of its chief? Why the enormous influence of parents upon the fortunes, morality, and health of their children? Why that law of the physical order, which

* Matth. xxv. 41, 42.

† Nisi quis renatus fuerit, &c. (John iii. 5.)

‡ See *St. Augustin*, lib. v. *cont. Julian*, cap. 2. *De lib. arbit.* lib. iii. cap. 23. *St. Gregor. Naz. orat.* xl. *St. Gregor. Nyssen. orat. de Infant.* *St. Thomas*, in 2, *dist.* 33, *qe.* 2, *art.* 2. *Innocent. iii. cap. Majores*, de baptismo, &c.

permits the whole ship's company to perish through the fault of the pilot?

If, as we have said, it is the design of God to bind all men, at some future time, by the ties of the most perfect union, was it not worthy of his wisdom to rescue them in this life from the isolation of selfishness, by establishing among them, with community of blood, the community of joys and sorrows?

Besides, at the same time that divine justice left us all to die in Adam, infinite love prepared for us in a second father, a life far superior to that we had lost. Certainly it is not permitted us to murmur, since we have seen this humanity, sunk so low by the crime of Eden, rising so high by the redemption of Calvary, that it has been seated for eighteen hundred years at the right hand of our heavenly Father, and will be seated there forever.

Let us agree then, that Christianity alone has truly known the origin of our woes; has alone revealed to us the nature of them and sounded their depths.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NATURE OF THE SIN OF THE FIRST MAN. ITS PERMANENT INFLUENCE ON THE LIFE, BOTH OF NATIONS AND INDIVIDUALS.

SACRED history shows us, in the crime of our first parents, three very distinct crimes.

I. An insane desire to equal God in knowledge, which was punished immediately by the discovery that they had become brutes.*

* *Eritis sicut dii, scientes bonum et malum. Et aperti sunt oculi amborum; cùmque cognovissent se esse nudos, &c. (Gen. iii. 5, 7.)*

II. An unbounded cupidity which, leading them to seize upon the only good that God had reserved to himself, caused the loss of the enjoyment of all others, and compelled them to lead the meanest life.*

III. An unworthy indulgence of the senses which, attracted by the beauty of the fruit, demanded their gratification in contempt of the prohibitions of the Creator; and the senses were no sooner satisfied, than the offenders were filled with confusion, and obliged to hide themselves.†

Pride, avarice, sensuality, are the three deep wounds which the infernal serpent inflicted upon humanity; wounds always bleeding in the heart, and which always produce in it the same fruits of death, until the efficacious balm of Christ heals them.

What is in truth the history of the human race, except the continual and faithful reproduction of the terrible drama of Eden?

Their tastes, as simple and pure as their thoughts, make the burden of life sweet and light for them. They go on their way singing, and what do they sing? The Divinity, whose powerful and paternal action is revealed to their intelligence, in the least phenomena of nature, as well as in the magnificent spectacle of the heavens.

To the sublime and simple accents of a poetry entirely religious, insensibly succeed the cold and sterile speculations of a proud philosophy. The accidental discovery of some half-truths violently excites the human mind. Pre-occupied by

* *Ex omni ligno paradisi comede; de ligno autem scientiæ boni et mali ne comedas. (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) Comedes herbam terræ. In sudore vultûs tui vesceris pane, &c. (iii. 18, 19.)*

† *Vidit igitur mulier quòd bonum esset lignum ad vescendum, et pulchrum oculis, aspectuque delectabile. Consuerunt folia ficûs et fecerunt sibi perizomata. Et cùm audissent vocem Domini abscondit se Adam, &c. (iii. 7, 8.)*

second causes which strike its imagination, it loses sight of the first cause, and finishes by doubting its existence. Thus, after a few experiments in electricity, it believes that it comprehends the manner in which thunder and lightning are formed. Henceforth that majestic sound, those terrific flashes, which filled it with religious awe, are only a natural phenomenon in its eyes, and it feels compassion for those who still imagine that it is God who thunders.

Elated by this success, it begins to measure the truths of intellectual and moral order, and as it cannot comprehend any of them, it rejects them all in succession. At last, weary of passing from one error to another, it falls from skepticism, into materialism, and the same philosophy which said to it; "Give a free course to your thought, and the knowledge of good and evil will make of you a God," forces it to this humiliating avowal: "I am only an animal; to think is to degrade myself."*

Pride passing from the mind into the will, enkindles in it the fires of ambition, and introduces into the heart of man a second fury, avarice.

In a world where gold regulates everything,† man is nothing and can be nothing without wealth. Hence a grasping avarice, which would swallow up the universe, if it did not meet with rival cupidity to dispute the command with it. But as the desires of ambition and avarice extend in a much larger proportion than their domain or their treasure, they mourn over their own insignificance at the height of grandeur, and over their misery in the bosom of opulence. Alexander, master of half the world, was inconsolable that it was no larger.

Then comes the ill success of ambition. How many ascend the Capitol only to fall from the Tarpeian rock! How

* "L'homme qui pense est un animal dépravé." (*J. J. Rousseau.*)

† Pecuniæ obediunt omnia. (*Eccles. x. 19.*)

many who have reached the Kremlin, find there the road to St. Helena! How many eager speculators are thrown from the royal exchange into a prison or a hospital!

Wretched himself, the avaricious and ambitious man is also a scourge to others. Wishing to satisfy his fictitious wants, he creates around him real necessities. As we have already said, the goods of this earth are limited; they cannot accumulate in certain hands without leaving others empty; and, according to the words of Seneca, thousands of poor are required to make one man rich.* Indigence is also extreme wherever colossal fortunes are building up. Among nations still more than among individuals, it is the love of riches which engenders poverty.

Man wishes to possess, only to enjoy. Having become *wholly flesh*,† and seeing nothing beyond the narrow sphere of the senses, he plunges into animal delights, and quenches his burning thirst for pleasure in vile enjoyments. But what are the pleasures of earth for a heart which God alone can satisfy!‡ Degradation and severe maladies, gnawing enmity, dullness, weariness of life, which are always in the train of pleasure, prove that sensuality is its own executioner.

Mental degradation, poverty, disgust of life, carried even to suicide, these are the end of man, when relinquishing the hope of heaven, he attempts to satisfy here below his immense desire of knowledge, wealth and pleasure.

But if these three passions, which a sacred writer calls the *essence of the world*,§ diffuse such bitterness throughout our actual existence, how will it be in the life to come?

* Ex multis paupertatibus divitiæ fiunt. (Ep. lxxxviii.)

† Gen. vi. 3.

‡ Satiabor, cum apparuerit gloria tua. (Ps. xvi. 15.)

§ Omne quod est in mundo concupiscentia carnis est, et concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitæ. (I. John ii. 16.)

CHAPTER XXIV.

DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIANITY CONCERNING HELL, EMINENTLY RATIONAL.—IS GOD THE CREATOR OF HELL?

CHRISTIANITY has been reproached for its doctrine concerning hell. On this point, however, as on many others, it has only confirmed and purified the universal faith, as one of its great enemies avowed more than fifteen centuries ago.

The Christians, said Celsus, are right in thinking that those who lead holy lives will be rewarded after death, and that the wicked will suffer *eternal punishment*. This sentiment, however, is common to them with all the world.*

Let any one read what the Egyptians have said of their Amenthes; the Greeks and Romans, of Hades and Tartarus; the Persians, of their Douzakh; the Hindoos, of their Patalam; the Scandinavians of their Nastroud, &c., and it will be seen that the dogma of an hell, of an eternal hell, is always in harmony with the common sense of the people. This belief must necessarily have had very deep root in the human mind, to resist the shock of violent passions in the religions of Paganism, and oblige the majority of philosophers to be of the same mind concerning it as the common people.†

Besides, nothing is more natural, or more logically necessary, than the existence of hell. Could the eternal legislator be blind to what the most unenlightened person amongst us

* Celsus, apud Origen. lib. viii.

† Among others, Plato, in various parts of his works; Cicero, in the book of *Consolation* (Lactant Instit. iii. 19.): and Plutarch, *Delay of Divine justice*. The first, after having spoken in his *Gorgias* of the frightful punishments which entirely *incorrigible* criminals would suffer eternally, adds: “*What I say may be despised, I know; but after mature reflection and thorough examination, I find nothing which is more consonant with wisdom, reason and truth.*”

detects in the heart of man ; a mass of corruption, which can be overthrown only by the fear of punishment ?

Not a political society, nor even the smallest corporation, can be found on the earth, that has not its purgatory and hell, that is to say, a series of penalties graduated according to the nature of the offences committed, and extending from the slightest censure to death itself.*

What a truly contemptible contradiction ! We consent that earthly rulers should inflict penalties as terrible as that of death, to inspire respect for laws whose scope is low and temporary ; and we are not willing that God should lift the arm of his justice, when the laws of an eternal society are to be protected, and man elevated to the sublime height of his destiny !

It may be said, what proportion is there between temporal faults and eternal punishments ?—I will ask in my turn ; what proportion is there between an assassination, often the act of less than a minute, and the penalty of death, eternal in its consequences ?

I know that in an age of folly like ours, there are many foolish persons who would move heaven and earth, to efface from our codes this pretended relic of barbarism. But I know also, that all men of sense would unite in saying to them : “ Gentlemen, before abolishing capital punishment, abolish the crimes which render it indispensable. We too have feeling hearts, and the day of a public execution always seems to us a dark day ; but we can imagine one still darker, when the legislator, conforming to your wishes, should venture to remove the only check which restrains criminals, and deliver us up to their mercy.

“ We do indeed love all men ; but our liveliest sympathy is

* We have no college nor school so poorly organized, that it has not the power to strike with death, that is, exclude forever from its membership the dunce, who is considered incorrigible.

for these good people who, thanks to God, form a large majority. So long as you fail to offer them guarantees equal to those which the existing laws supply against the ferocity of your clients, they will see in your pretended philanthropic machinations only a treasonable attempt, which would merit condign punishment, if there was not in your favor the very extenuating circumstance of extreme stupidity."

I would say to those who wish for a God, a religion and a heaven, without a hell, change the moral constitution of man. Induce him, freed from vicious inclinations, (the unhappy fruit of the abuse of his liberty), to consent to approach God invariably from motives of hope and love, without needing the influence of fear, and God will at once extinguish hell; for he tenderly loves his creatures, and is deeply afflicted at their ruin.* But until you have done what God himself has not thought it possible to do,† leave Christianity the only lever it holds with which to raise our earth-bound will to heaven.

The inductions which result from the uniformly acknowledged principles of faith, reason, and experience, are these.—Man will never enjoy God, if he does not love him above all things; he never will love him above all things, if he does not know him; he will never know him, if he does not enter into himself, and rise by reflection above the delusive impressions of the senses; man will never make the necessary effort to reflect seriously on his future destiny, and labor for his own reformation, if he is not moved to do so at first by fear; a

* Sap. i, 13.—xi. 25.

† Without doubt, God could have made man impeccable, but deprived of the peculiar honor of co-operating freely with the Creator in his own perfection, man, according to this hypothesis would no longer be that wonderful creature whom God can call his *likeness*, his *friend*, his *child*; but a brilliant automaton, placed in heaven as the sun is placed in the firmament.

limited and temporary punishment, such as it has been attempted to substitute for an eternal hell, will not produce in a heart where passion reigns, that *fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom*.*

Let us listen to the words of a philosopher who is beyond the reach of suspicion. "A fatal experience proves to us that an eternity of suffering, however terrible it may be, is no more severe than is needed to restrain us from crime. This punishment is then proportioned to the end which the supreme legislator proposes to himself, to prevent, as far as possible, the violation of his laws. If it is in proportion to this object, it is not then unjust. Experience, in proving its necessity, shows its justice."†

Yes, alas! nothing less than Gehenna with all its train of eternal torments is required, to elevate the soul to God; the soul sunk in low enjoyments and ruled by brutal appetites. It is indeed hell that peoples heaven; and if this consuming furnace is the work of God, he has kindled it with the fire of his love.

But is God truly the creator of hell? Does nothing oblige us to believe it? If it is written that, *God has kindled a fire in his wrath*, it is also written that *he will draw this fire out of the heart of man*.‡ If it is said that the condemned shall be the eternal food of death, it is also said, that it is the sinner, not God, who has created death.§ To some passages of scripture which give to God an active part in the punishment of the condemned, it would be easy to oppose a hundred

* Initium sapientiæ, timor Domini. (Ps. cx. 10.)

† Thomas, *Reflexions philosophiques et littéraires sur le Poëme de la Religion naturelle*.

* Ignis succensus est in furore meo, &c. (Deuter. xxxii, 22.)—Producam ergo ignem de medio tui, qui comedat te. (Ezech. xxviii. 18.)

† Mors depascet eos. (Ps. xlviii. 15.)—Deus mortem non fecit. . . Impii autem manibus et verbis accersierunt illam. (Sap. i. 13, 16.)

others which affirm that it is the sinner himself *who has dug his own pit*, and that he *will only reap in eternity what he has sown in time*.*

CHAPTER XXV.

HELL, AS WELL AS HEAVEN, IS THE DAILY CREATION OF
MAN IN THIS LIFE.

WHAT is hell? It is the work of pride, cupidity, and sensuality; a work still latent in the heart of the living man, but which must necessarily be developed with terrific force at the moment when death places the sinner in the presence of God.

Let us review some of the principles already established.

Happiness consists in the possession of an object capable of entirely satisfying our desires; unhappiness, in the privation of this object.† The degree of happiness or misery depends on the intensity of desire. The intensity of desire is in proportion to the capacity of the affections. The developement of this capacity is in proportion to the number and intensity of acts, that is, of efforts made to reach the object desired.

Two objects solicit the love of every man at his birth; God and the creature. On one side, God, an unfathomable and shoreless ocean of goodness, power, and beauty, alone capable of quenching our thirst of knowledge, wealth and pleasure; he would, of course, take captive our love, if we were permitted to contemplate his essence; but, through re-

* *Lacum aperiuit, et effudit eum: et incidit in foveam quam fecit.* (Ps. vii. 16.)—*In operibus manuum suarum comprehensus est peccator.* (Ps. ix. 17.)—*Quæ enim seminaverit homo, hæc et metet.* (Gal. vi. 8.)

† See as above, ch. xv.

spect for the liberty which he has given us, he veils from our eye, during the short course of human life, his ineffably beneficent qualities, and influences our hearts only by the spectacle of his sensible works, by the interior voice of conscience and of grace, and by the teachings of religion. On the other side, the creature is merely a nullity when considered in itself; it displays before us the perfections with which God has enriched it, perfections doubly deceitful, both on account of their enormous disproportion to our desires, and their short duration.

Man is called to choose between these two extremes, between the whole and nothing. He cannot attach himself to God without detaching himself from the creature; nor attach himself to the creature without despising God.* If he seeks God, if he applies his understanding to the knowledge of him, if he bends his will to his laws, in contempt of his own inclinations, each thought, each sigh is a step towards happiness; it is one degree more of the opening of his soul to God; it is a germ of life deposited in his heart, which is only awaiting the sun of eternity to unfold it. The more he multiplies these acts during his life, the more intense they become, and the more also, in the day of recompense, his heart will dilate and become capable of a more perfect communication with the divine being.†

If, on the contrary, man following only the impulse of his senses falls into the *coarse net which creatures extend for him*;‡ if he abandons his heart to the love of the honors,

* *Nemo potest duobus dominis servire: aut eam unum odio habebit et alterum diliget; aut unum sustinebit, et alterum contemnet. Non potestis Deo servire et mammonæ. (Matth. vi. 24.)*

† *Ego sum Dominus Deus tuus . . . Dilata os tuum, et implebo illud. (Ps. lxxx. 11.)*

‡ *Creaturæ Dei in odium factæ sunt, et in tentationem animabus hominum, et in musculam pedibus insipientium. (Sap. xiv. 11.)*

riches and pleasures, which the fleeting vision of this world offers him, every effort he makes to procure them, in contempt of the Divine love, is a *sin*, that is, according to the deep signification of this word, it is an *error*, a *fall*, a *false step*, which separates him from the true good; * it is an approach towards death. Eager for vanity, exciting in his heart wild desires which can never be satisfied, † he prepares for himself eternal regrets, and the liveliness of his regrets will be in proportion to the intensity of his desires.

Let us imagine now two men who have given to their faculties an equal development, one towards God, the other towards the creature. In both the same love of honor, wealth and pleasure, (for the love of these things is innate in man; with this difference only, that the one seeks them where they are, the other where they are not). What a prodigious distance, however, separates these two beings! one carries heaven in his heart, the other hell; and yet they little suspect this, so deeply are they involved in the obscurity of this life, while they are passing through it. If a foretaste of celestial joy is sometimes permitted to the one, he only deploras more deeply the continuance of his exile, and with sighs he fills up the measure of those good works, which are every instant adding new rubies to his eternal crown.

If remorse and disgust exercise the other, he finds in a whirlpool of pleasures and business a means of distraction, and he swallows like water those iniquities which will soon be changed into eternal flames.

* In most languages, *sin* is synonymous with *fall*, *wandering*, *going astray*, *rebellion*, *falling away*, &c. See in Hebrew, the roots Chata, Paschah, &c., in Greek, Ἀμαρτάνω.

† And how could they be satisfied! since the sinner desires two things evidently impossible; 1st, to find perfect happiness in imperfect objects; 2d, to enjoy infinitely, creatures whose end everything proclaims. It is also written, *the desire of the sinner shall perish*. (Ps. cxi. 10.)

To reveal the fund of life and of death accumulated in these two hearts, what is required? A ray from the face of the Godhead, a spark of that divine fire which purifies and brings out in incomparable lustre, the gold of virtue, and burns without consuming the withered stalk of vice.* Let death tear away the veil which conceals from them the presence of the Infinite Being; both will equally experience in their faculty of knowledge, that expansion which the intuition of supreme truth produces in every intelligence; both will feel equally in their heart, that indescribable burst of desire and love which the presence of infinite beauty necessarily calls forth.†

But the one, following the direction which he has impressed upon his will, in the bosom of infinite love, will satisfy, but never extinguish, the ardor of his desires. There he will reap, in the ecstasy of eternal joy, all that he has sown in the brief afflictions of life. Not a holy thought, not a moment of prayer and communion with God, that has not produced a more profound knowledge of the overwhelming glories of the Divine Being; not a mortification suffered for God, not an act of humility or modesty, but has added a step to his throne, a ray to his diadem; not a sacrifice made for the love of poverty, that has not increased his dominion by one province; not a fast, not an abstinence, which has not merited an increase of enjoyment; not a cup of water given to a neighbor that is not changed into a river of joy.‡ In one word, not an act done for God which has not disposed the heart by enlarging it, for a greater effusion of divine life.

* Si quis autem superædificat . . . aurum, argentum, lapides pretiosos, ligna, fœnum, stipulam . . . uniuscujusque opus quale sit, ignis probabit. (I. Cor. iii. 12, 13.)

† See above, ch. xix.

‡ Qui seminant in lacrymis, in exultatione metent. Euntes ibant et flebant, mittentes semina sua. Venientes autem venient cum exultatione, portantes manipulos suos. (Ps. cxxv. 5, 6.)

What will take place, on the contrary, to the confirmed devotee of this world? Irrevocably placed by death in a declared opposition to the divine will, he finds himself separated from the great river of life by a gulf forever impassable.* There alone with his works, he gathers also in the paroxysms of an eternal despair the fruits of death which he has sown in the vain joys of earth. For every effort of his pride to glorify itself, before men, there is a corresponding degree of abjectness; for every guilty project to increase his riches, an increase of misery; for every criminal pleasure, a proportionate share of suffering. How could it be otherwise? If it is an obvious principle even of reason, that all good resides essentially in God, and that sin separates from God, is it not plain that the sinner plunges into darkness, humiliation, misery and suffering, just in proportion as he withdraws from Him who is light, greatness, wealth and pleasure itself.†

Of whom could this wretched being complain except of of himself? Are not the pains he suffers the work of his own hands?‡ Is it God who has repelled him, is it not rather he who has repelled God, who has said to him: "Depart from me, I do not desire thy love?"§ What has God done? After many years of patience, he has taken the insolent man at his word; "Thy will be done, he has said to

* *Inter nos et vos chaos magnum firmatum est: ut hi, qui volunt hinc transire ad vos, non possint, neque inde huc transmeare.* (Luc. xvi. 26.)

† *Qui elongant se à te, peribunt.* (Ps. lxxii. 27.) *Omnes, qui te derelinquunt, confundentur: recedentes à te, in terrâ scribentur: quoniam dereliquerunt venam aquarum viventium Dominum.* (Jerem. xvii. 13.)

‡ *Luet quæ fecit omnia, nec tamen consumetur: juxta multitudinem adinventionum suarum, sic et sustinebit.* (Job xxi. 18.)

§ *Recede à nobis, et scientiam viarum tuarum nolumus.* (Job xxi. 14.)

him; thy life has ever been forgetfulness of thy God; I might punish thee, I am satisfied with forgetting thee."*

Hitherto we have seen hell only as the work of the sinner. But is this the whole?

CHAPTER XXVI.

PAIN OF LOSS OF THE REPROBATE.—CONJECTURE CONCERNING THE PAIN OF FIRE.

IN the pictures which the scriptures have drawn of hell, we see two sorts of punishment, that which theologians call *the pain of loss*, represented by the *worm that never dies*, that is, the remorse, regret and despair resulting from losing God, and the punishment of the *fire which is never quenched*,† on which Scripture most insists, as being most effectual in making a lively impression upon men.

It is easy to conceive of the frightful despair which the sight of what he has lost in losing his God, would awaken in the heart of the reprobate. We have every day under our eye the strange effects of an unhappy passion. We see wretched persons falling into violent rage, hating life and rushing madly to death, one because he has lost a place or a fortune ardently desired, the other an idol of flesh. Now if the human heart, small as it is, is capable of such tremendous passions, what will it become when it is immeasurably expanded from its contact with the Divine Being! If the loss of an office or a fortune wound it so deeply, how horrible will be its sufferings when it finds itself deprived of the

* Si quis autem ignorat, ignorabitur. (I. Cor. xiv. 38.) Nunquam novi vos. Nescio vos. (Matth. vii. 23, xxv. 12.)

† Vermis eorum non moritur, et ignis non extinguitur. (Mark ix. 45.)

immense inheritance of glory, power and wealth, which God shares with those who love him! If it cannot support the loss of one of those fragile beauties, which are born and die by thousands every day, how will it support the loss of the one eternal beauty, of which all created perfections were they united in the same person, are but a vain shadow!

For the reflecting man there are many consolations in the misfortunes of this life.

There is no creature so perfect as to be faultless, and the despised lover can revenge himself by contempt. But who can despise God, that has once seen him!

There are no creatures who have not many resembling them. But there is but one God, and apart from God there is nothing.

There is no lasting enjoyment in this life, and infidelity only anticipates death. But God once possessed is never lost.

Misfortunes here below are, for the most part, involuntary, and rarely can the victim say; "I could have prevented"... But the reprobate can only accuse himself; "I have what I deserve; if my suffering is endless, it is because my folly was boundless."

Finally, Death is always present, saying to the afflicted; "Your sorrows will have an end." But the lost soul reads everywhere; "Eternity!" and his eye is forced to measure the frightful depths of that word which he never before would consider.

Let us now imagine this wretched being, consumed by boundless desires without the least hope of satisfying them, a prey to remorse that nothing can appease, and we shall comprehend without difficulty his *gnashing of teeth*, his *weeping*, and his calling in vain for death.*

* Ibi erit fletus, et stridor dentium. (Matth. viii. 12.) Quærent homines mortem, et non invenient eam; et desiderabunt mori, et fugiet mors ab eis. (Apoc. ix. 6.)

This is indeed the never-dying worm which sin deposits in the heart of the sinner; this is the inextinguishable fire which will consume his soul.

But will the fire which, according to Scripture and universal belief, must torment the body of the condemned, be found there also, or is it only the irruption of the fires of the soul into the physical organization? This conjecture, I think may be permitted, without violating Scripture or tradition. Both suppose a real fire which will inflict a suffering upon the condemned, distinct from the pain of loss, and it would be presumptuous to admit only a metaphorical fire, and one identical with moral suffering alone;* but both preserve silence on the origin and secret nature of this fire.—Many passages of Scripture even imply that this terrible agent of Divine vengeance, is to be the work of the sinner,† and distinguished Christian philosophers have concurred in this belief.

“Do not believe,” said St. Augustine, “that this serenity and ineffable divine light, can draw from itself wherewith to

* This was the opinion of Origen and Lactantius, which was not formally condemned but visibly contradicted by the unanimous teaching of the Fathers, and irreconcilable with the principles of sacred criticism, the Bible speaking in various places of the fire of hell, without any indication of metaphor. We must not however, confound the *reality* of hell fire with its *materiality*; the latter is at least very doubtful, when natural philosophers call in question, and not without some reason, the materiality of terrestrial fire. (See Thénard, *Elément de chimie*, tom. i. page 35.) Admitting, as we do, the reality of the effects of infernal fire, the claims of the doctrine are equally satisfied.

† To the passages cited in the text or the notes of the two preceding chapters, the number of which could be easily increased, I shall only add these words of the Psalmist, very remarkable for the identity of the cause which they assign, both for the happiness of the just, and the sufferings of the condemned: *Lætificabis eum in gaudio cum vultu tuo . . . Pones eos ut clibanum ignis in tempore vultûs tui . . . Pones eos dorsum, &c.* (Ps. xx. 7, 10, 13.)

punish sin, but rather that it has so ordered our sins, that what constituted the pleasure of the sinner will serve as an instrument of divine vengeance."*

Bossuet, developing the thought of the eagle of Hippo, speaks thus. "Let us not imagine that hell consists in fearful torments, in pools of fire and sulphur, in eternally devouring flames, in rage, despair and horrible gnashing of teeth. Hell, if we understand it, is sin itself; hell is to be deprived of God, *and the proof of it is evident from the Scriptures.*"† Elsewhere, commenting upon these words of the Lord in Ezekiel: *I will make to come forth from the midst of thee, the fire which shall devour thee*; he adds; "I shall not send it from afar against thee; it shall be kindled in thy conscience, and the flames shall burst forth from the midst of thee, and it shall be thy sins that shall produce it. Dost thou remember, Christian, that while sinning, thou art forging the instrument of thy own eternal punishment? Thou art doing so. Thou swallowest iniquity like water; and art swallowing torrents of flames."‡

Experience itself favors this sentiment.

What more incontrovertible, than the influence of the moral affections over the body! No violent passion is ever enkindled in the soul, that the flames of it do not communicate without. Despair, above all others, presents the symptoms of a true conflagration. The eyes flash; the blood, boiling in the veins, spreads fire to the extremities, and if it

* Ne putemus illam tranquillitatem et ineffabile lumen, Dei de se proferre unde peccata puniantur: sed ipsa peccata sic ordinare, ut quæ fuerunt delectamenta homini peccanti sunt instrumenta Domino punienti. (Enar. Ps. vii. n. 16.)

† Sermon sur la gloire de Dieu, dans la conversion des pécheurs. 1^{er} point.

‡ Sermon sur la nécessité de la pénitence, pour le 3^e. dimanche de l'Avant, 1^{er} point. See also Sermon 2^e. pour le dimanche des Rameaux, sur la nécessité des souffrances, 3^e. point, et alibi.

is not carried off, the organization is dissolved in the midst of a devouring fever.

Let us imagine now in the superior faculties of man the fire of despair, as intense as it will be in the condemned, when he contemplates, by necessity, the immensity of his misfortune in the greatness and beauty of the God whom he has lost.*

Let us suppose also in his material organization, that tenacity which divine power will give to the resuscitated body, and which will enable it to suffer all the anguish of death without dying,† and we can imagine without difficulty that the condemned soul, united to the body, will carry into it all the elements of an eternal conflagration.‡

To this fire bursting forth from the interior depths of man, let us add that which will be kindled from the eternal assault of all creatures in *arms against the enemies of God*.§ The sinner having turned them against the Creator, by making

* Will not the condemned see the divine essence throughout eternity, and will not their punishment consist above all in this sight? Certain words of scripture would authorize this conjecture; among others, the following: *Pœnas dabunt in interitu æternas à facie Domini, et à gloriâ virtutis ejus*, (II. Thessal. i. 9.) See the commentators on this passage. As for the rest, we have no need of this hypothesis to support our conjectures concerning the fires of hell. All agree that the condemned will see God at least at the day of judgment: now, God once seen, how can he be forgotten!

† *Mors depascet eos*. (Ps. xlviii. 15.)—*Fugiet mors ab eis*. (Apoc. ix. 6.)

‡ It may be easily conceived, after what we have said above, (ch. xxv.) that the intensity of this fire will necessarily be proportioned to the degree of culpability in each individual, and that in the same individual it will torment more violently the most offending organs, accomplishing thus the divine law: *per quæ peccat quis, per hæc et torquetur*. (Sap. v. 18, 21.)

§ *Armabit creaturam ad ultionem inimicorum . . . et pugnabit cum illo orbis terrarum contra insensatos*. (Sap. v. 18, 21.)

them serve his iniquities, is it not just that they should avenge this violence by turning against the traitor? It is very natural to believe, that in this transformation after which they have sighed,* creatures will become, according to the different dispositions of the elect and condemned, a subject of joy for the former, and torment for the latter.†

I will not stop to speak of another punishment of the guilty, that of the society of hell. Satan being the first of sinners, and the instigator of all sin, it is just that the man who yields to his inspirations in contempt of the divine law, should fall under the power of this master.‡ And what a master is this most perverse of beings! what society is that of desperadoes, furies and demons!

But enough. If this philosophical view of hell has power to cause him who would measure its extent, to shudder, it is wonderfully adapted to justify the God of Christians from the reproach of cruelty raised by the skeptic. Hell thus comprehended is exclusively the creation of the sinner. If the wretched man finds *all evil pouring over him as a flood*,§ it is because he persists in living far from Him who contains within himself all good. It is not a strange hand that kindles *the devouring fire*: all his torment consists in being delivered up to himself,|| and it is that which he has always desired.

There is only one more possible objection; it is that God,

* *Exspectatio creaturæ, revelationem filiorum Dei exspectat.* (Rom. viii. 19.)

† We may cite for example the sun, whose light rejoices or scorches the eye, according as the latter is well or ill-conditioned.

‡ *Qui facit peccatum, ex diabolo est; quoniam ab initio diabolus peccat.* (I. John iii. 8.)

§ *Omnis dolor irruet super eum.* (Job xx, 22.)

|| *Devorabit eum ignis, qui non succenditur, affligetur relictus in tabernaculo suo.* (Job xx. 26.)

knowing the weakness and stupidity of man, owed it to his benevolence either to leave this being in non-existence, or enlighten him fully with regard to the eternal consequences of sin. The following chapters will show, if on this last point God has withheld from us the light.

CHAPTER XXVII.

NECESSITY OF THE INCARNATION.—PREPARATION OF THE HUMAN RACE FOR THIS EVENT.—ITS REALISATION.

WHEN by meditation upon the principles which I have now established, we are entirely convinced of the astonishing destinies of man; when we see him placed in the terrible alternative of rising to infinite happiness, or sinking into eternal torments; when, on the other hand, we consider the extreme weakness and corruption of this being, the frightful carelessness with which he journeys through life, without ever asking where he is going; when we think of the insurmountable obstacles which he opposes to the divine offers of affection, by his brutal habits, we ask ourselves in alarm: “Who will transform this worm of the dust into an angel!* Who will have power to bring forth from this mire, a being pure and noble enough for the three holy God to rest his eye upon him with complacency!”

Who—The All-Powerful alone. But if, in order to preserve to man his liberty, God chooses to employ only the moral influence of word and example, how can man be made to understand it, since he has lost the sense by which God is

* *Noi siam vermi.*

Nati a formar l'angelica farfalla. (Dante.)

perceived?* Will God assume a body? "Yes," answers Christianity.

Since, then, the children of God have become flesh and blood, the Word, which has created them and can alone regenerate them, (God acting only through his Word) has become flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth.†

To prepare the human race for an event which, by its enormous disproportion to our intellectual weakness, would have shocked our ignorance, required no less than forty centuries.

God first announced it under a veil of mystery, to our guilty ancestors, on the very scene of their crime.‡ The promise of a Redeemer, frequently renewed to the patriarchs, was spread abroad throughout all nations coming forth from their loins, with the profoundly mysterious rite of the bloody sacrifice. The expectation of a victim who should descend from heaven to purify humanity, became the religion of all the children of Adam.

The Jewish nation was chosen to preserve the promise in all its purity, and in the fullness of time to proclaim the accomplishment of it to the world. Hence the isolated existence of this wonderful people; hence its symbolical religion, its legislation truly incomprehensible, until the completion of it by Christ.§

Hence among this people the mysterious office of the Prophets, who, as ambassadors despatched from heaven, came in succession during eleven centuries to announce the arrival of

* Animalis autem homo non percipit ea quæ sunt Spiritûs Dei. (I. Cor. ii. 14.)

† Quia ergo pueri communicaverunt carni et sanguini, et ipse similiter participavit eisdem. (Heb. ii. 11.) Verbum caro factum est et habitavit in nobis . . . plenum gratiæ et veritatis. (John i. 14.)

‡ Inimicitias ponam inter te et mulierem, et semen tuum et semen illius: ipsa conteret caput tuum. (Gen. iii. 15.)

§ Finis enim legis, Christus. (Rom. x. 4.)

the great king, and each writes in anticipation a page of his history; for this history, in order to be believed, has need of the testimony of all ages.

At the same time that God multiplied prodigies to prepare the world for faith in the greatest of prodigies, the human race multiplied and infinitely increased their disgraceful sufferings, to justify the intervention of the supreme physician to the blindest eye. The history of pagan nations, as well as that of the Jewish nation, is the prelude to the Gospel.

Four thousand years had past after the fatal conversation of Eve with the angel of darkness, when, in a poor dwelling of the little city of Nazareth, an angel leaving the abode of light, came to treat of our salvation with a young daughter of Judah. By a woman our ruin began; and to a woman God reserved the beginning of our redemption.

Mary opposed to the pride, cupidity, and sensuality of the first woman, the three contrary virtues. Her words impressed with a profound love of humility, disinterestedness and purity,* announced the true *mother of the living*, a glorious title, which was bestowed on Eve only in trust, even if it were not cast at her in severest† derision.

Mary submitted, and immediately, by the power of the arm of the Most High, which threw the celestial intelligences into

* Humility: at the very flattering salutation of the angel, Mary is troubled. (*Turbata est*, &c., Luke i. 29.)—She was told that she was *full of grace*, and was to become the Mother of the Most High; she answered that she was only his servant, and sought in her lowliness alone, the reason for the choice of the Lord. (Luke i. 38, 48.)—She concealed from her spouse her infinite dignity, at the risk of suffering the most cruel indignity. (Matt. i. 19.)—What heroic disinterestedness, what love of purity, in the resolution to renounce the most glorious throne of heaven next to that of God, rather than to expose her virginity! (*Quomodo fiet istud*, &c.) (Luke i. 34.)

† Et vocavit Adam nomen uxoris suæ, Heva· eò quòd mater esset cunctorum viventium. (Gen. iii. 20.)

an eternal rapture, He whose majesty surpasses the immensity of the heavens, He who holds in his hand the universe as a grain of sand, enclosed himself in the womb of a virgin.*

CHAPTER XXVIII.

OFFICE OF THE GOD-MAN.

As mediator between God and man, descending upon the earth to overthrow the wall of division which excluded us forever from the celestial country, the God-Man has a double office to fill, one towards God, the other towards man.

To God, whose majesty has been grossly violated by the contempt of man, a satisfaction must be made. What satisfaction? No other than the death of the guilty.

As we have already seen, death *is the wages* of sin, and it is a law of unchangeable order, that the creature cannot rebel against the Creator without introducing throughout his being the elements of eternal death.†

The divine representative of humanity must then die; and this sacrifice, immeasurably increased by the innocence and infinite dignity of the victim, forced from the Divine justice these words which the eternal sufferings of the immense posterity of Adam could never have obtained; “*Behold enough, behold more than was needed.*”‡ The Word also, while assuming the body that a divine hand had formed for him in

* Beata mater munere,
Cujus supernus artifex,
Mundum pugillo continens,
Ventris sub arcâ clausus est.

(*Hymn of the Office of the B. V. M.*)

† See as above, ch. xxii. xxv. and xxvi.

‡ Ubi autem abundavit delictum, superabundavit gratia. (Rom. v. 20)

the bosom of Mary, said to the Father; "The victims and the offerings of men have nothing worthy of thy justice; but it will not be so with the body thou hast prepared for me.*

What was needed to prepare man for the divine alliance? —Three things:

I. To establish in his mind and heart, with the living faith of a God dying for us, the principle of all justice.† To inspire him at the same time with a great fear and a great love of God, by manifesting to him in the depths of this mystery, the whole of God's hatred of sin, and charity for man. To bring before him an idea of the joys of heaven and the terrors of hell, by the extraordinary effort God has vouchsafed to make, to put him in possession of the one, and preserve him from the other.

II. It was necessary to confound his meanness, and teach him by the most powerful examples of humility, poverty and mortification, to destroy in himself the life of pride, cupidity and sensuality, which he had received from Adam, a life which would necessarily exclude him from the celestial inheritance.‡

III. It was necessary to remedy his extreme weakness by the infusion of a new life, and rescue him from the curse which oppresses the children of the old man, by incorporating him with the new man, born on Calvary in holiness and justice.§

Immense task, which would have overwhelmed all the

* Ideo ingrediens mundum dicit: Hostiam et oblationem noluisti: corpus autem aptasti mihi, &c. (Heb. x. 5.)

† The whole Christian doctrine, in fact, is contained in the knowledge of *Jesus crucified*; and St. Paul, commissioned to announce all truth to the nations, rejoiced in knowing nothing else: *Non enim judicavi me scire aliquid inter vos, nisi Jesum Christum, et hunc crucifixum.* (I. Cor. ii. 2.)

‡ Caro et sanguis regnum Dei possidere non possunt. (I. Cor. xv. 50.)

§ Induite novum hominem, qui secundum Deum creatus est in justitiâ et sanctitate veritatis. (Ephes. iv. 24.)

powers of heaven and earth, and which made the Man-God himself tremble.* How should it commence? With sensual men, it was necessary first to speak to the eye. We shall therefore see the Saviour acting thirty years before speaking;† and even then the word will always be subordinate to speech.

CHAPTER XXIX.

BIRTH OF THE GOD-MAN.—HIS PRIVATE AND PUBLIC LIFE.

THE son of Mary had he been born on a throne formed of all the thrones of the universe, would have been none the less a God annihilated.‡ But man had too exalted an idea of himself, too low a one of God, to be impressed by such abasement. It is only reserved for the eye spiritualized by faith, to perceive the greatest of distance between God and men, between the all and nothingness.

To speak to the gross senses of man, to destroy at one stroke pride and its two attendant vices, the Creator of the universe was born in a stable, the only habitation open to the poverty of his parents.§ There was no other cradle than a manger for him who came to elevate man sunk to the level of the brute.|| It was in this depth of poverty and misery that the shepherds, warned by heaven recognized God the Saviour.¶

* *Cæpit pavere, et tædere.* (Mark xiv. 39.)

† *Cæpit Jesus facere, et docere.* (Acts i. 1.)

‡ *Semetipsum exinanivit.* (Philipp. ii. 7.)

§ *Non erat eis locus in diversorio.* (Luke ii. 7.)

|| *Homo, cùm in honore esset, non intellexit: comparatus est jumentis insipientibus, et similis factus est illis.* (Ps. xlviii. 13.)

¶ *Et hec vobis signum: Invenietis infantem pannis involutum, et positum in præsepio.* (Luke ii. 12.)

There is one thing above all others, revolting to pride and which is yet at the foundation of the social order, it is the sacrifice of self-will, is submission to God, and to all power which emanates from him. Jesus obeyed. In the womb of his mother he obeyed the decree which summoned him to Bethlehem to take his place on the registers of the Roman magistrate, among the five hundred millions of the slaves of Augustus. Scarcely born, he obeyed the law which demanded his blood to flow.* He endured the hardships of a long exile. Returning to Nazareth, he obeyed Mary in the offices of a narrow household; afterwards he followed Joseph to his labor, and learned from him, whom men regarded as his father, the art of making yokes and ploughs.† He even submitted (wonderful effort of resignation!) to the power which Satan has received to tempt the children of men.‡

After thirty years of a life which is contained in these four words: *He was subject to them*,|| he assembled around him twelve poor artizans like himself to publish the *good news*. What news? *The time is accomplished; the kingdom of God is at hand: renounce then, all earthly affections, through penance; all received opinions, through faith.*§

To prevent an illusion concerning the nature of this kingdom, he unveiled its awful legislation in the *Sermon on the Mount*,¶ in which, exalting all that man prizes, overthrowing all that he adores, he crushed to dust the three pillars of the throne of Satan, pride, cupidity and sensuality.

Such a doctrine required the sanction of heaven, and the teaching of example; hence, during the three years which

* Circumcision. † St. Justin.

‡ St. Matthew, iv. 1.

§ Et erat subditus illis. (Luke ii. 51.)

|| Quoniam impletum est tempus, et appropinquavit regnum Dei: pœnitementini igitur, et credite Evangelio. (Mark i. 15.)

¶ St. Matthew, v.

he employed in propagating it, *he healed all manner of sickness and every infirmity among the people*,* he called the dead themselves to testify to it; he led the poorest, humblest and most dependent life, and gave his followers reason sometimes to envy the foxes their holes.†

By means of his miracles and virtues, he induced a few disciples to listen to him, and occasionally arrested the attention and admiration of the inconstant multitude; but to make men believe and follow him in the path which he opened, another pulpit was required than the bare earth on the mountain-side, or the turf of the wilderness. Besides, as he himself said, no person can come to him unless the father draw him:‡ but before the father could diffuse over the barren heart of man the abundant influences of his grace, the son of man must shed the last drop of his blood.

Jesus was anointed king of heaven and earth, only on condition of taking the cross for a throne; and to bring the universe to his feet, he must ascend it.§

CHAPTER XXX.

NECESSITY FOR THE SUFFERINGS OF THE GOD-MAN.

UNTIL the eve of his death, it was the sole mission of the God-man to bear and sanctify the hard and painful yoke which sin had cast upon the children of Adam, *from the day*

* *Sanans omnem languorem, et omnem infirmitatem in populo.* (Matth. iv. 23.)

† *St. Matthew, viii. 20.*

‡ *Nemo potest venire ad me, nisi Pater . . . traxerit eum.* (John vi. 44.)

§ *Et ego si exaltatus fuero à terrâ, omnia traham ad me ipsum* (John xii. 32.)

*of their coming out of their mother's womb, until the day of their burial.** But here the scene is changed: we are no longer to suffer the temporal punishment due to our crimes, but the eternal penalty attached to them; it is hell with all its horrors, for which the representative of humanity is to offer an equivalent, and more than an equivalent to divine justice.

As we have said, hell is sin in all its blackness, experienced in all its bitterness; hell, is to be torn asunder in soul and body; it is to be cursed of God, cursed of all creatures; it is to become the sport of the most cruel of masters, Satan.

But is the son of God, the object of the eternal complacency to be cursed of his Father! The Most-High trodden under foot of Satan! "Who could believe it!" exclaimed, three thousand years ago, a prophet describing this fearful scene.†

The hour came, when earth and hell, executing the decree of heaven, exhibited to all ages what must be the punishment of sin, even when protected by the majesty of a God.

Jesus, after having given the last pledge of *his superabundant love* ‡ to his disciples, one of whom betrayed and the others abandoned him, went to the garden of Gethsemane. There, the cup of sorrow, which until then he had not tasted, offered him the depths of its suffocating dregs. Nature rebelled, holiness turned aside with horror; but love, more powerful than death, triumphed over all repugnance. Then the iniquities of all men, from him who desecrated Eden, to those who shall darken with crime the last hour of human existence, came sweeping like a flood over the great soul of Christ, and bore with it all the anguish of death, all the tor-

* Eccle. xl. 1.

† Quis credidit auditui nostro, &c. (Is. liii. 1, seq.)

‡ Cum dilexisset suos, qui erant in mundo, in finem dilexit eos (John xiii. 1.)

ments of hell, except despair.* In agony, he prayed more fervently; † but heaven, which only beheld in him our sins, the object of its malediction, ‡ was deaf. The tortures of the mind, reacting upon the body, forced from it a bloody sweat.§ If an angel came to sustain the victim, it was only because the sacrifice was commencing.

Behold Judas with the satellites of the Pontiff; or rather, according to the significant words of Pilate, concerning Jesus: "*Behold, in Jesus, man:*" || man with his duplicity and his hypocrisy.—Let him receive the kiss of Judas, cries with united voice heaven, earth and hell.

Here is man with his rebellion, his insane love of independence, his hatred of the yoke of duty.—Bind him, and drag him through the streets of Jerusalem.

Here is man who, from the height of his pride, arrogates to himself the right to judge and criticise everything, and who presumptuously censures even heaven itself.¶—Bring him before the tribunal; subject him to the most humiliating and absurd interrogations, and to the most iniquitous sentence.

Here is man who shrinks from the infliction, even the most deserved, his heart boiling over with vengeance at the least slight affront.—Let the most unmerited scourging, by the vilest hand, be inflicted on him.

Here is man with his exalted opinion of his own knowledge and wisdom, with his excessive love of approbation and praise,

* Posuit Dominus in eo iniquitatem omnium nostrum. (Is. liii. 6.)—Circumdederunt me dolores mortis; et torrentes iniquitatis conturbaverunt me. Dolores inferni circumdederunt me. (Ps. xvii. 5, 6.)

† Factus in agoniâ, prolixius orabat. (Luke xxii. 43.)

§ Factus pro nobis maledictum. (Gal. iii. 13.)

|| Luke xxii. 44.

¶ Ecce homo. (John xix. 5.)

* Posuerunt in cælum os suum; et lingua eorum transivit in terrâ. (Ps. lxxii. 9.)

flattering himself that he knows everything, and is ignorant of nothing.—Cover his eyes, strike him, and ask him who has done it. Adorn him afterwards with the badges of folly, and let Herod with his court unite his jeers to the shouts of the multitude.*

Here is man extremely jealous of the first rank, and revolving in his head various plans of self-aggrandizement; on the throne or in the galleys, he must command, and see his fellow-men at his feet.—Search your prisons for the most infamous criminal, and let the public voice elevate him above the *Man*. Encircle his head with a crown of thorns; arm his hands with a reed, wrap his shoulders in a purple rag, then striking his head, and spitting on his face, bend the knee and hail him king.

Here is man with this body, the consummate work of God's hand, which he has polluted from head to foot by innumerable infamies, most of them in secret.—Expose this naked body in your public place, bind it to a pillar, and let the scourge tear it till its bones are bare.†

Here is man, with his feet and hands still entire, and yet full of abominations; his mouth greedy of delicacies, his tongue soiled with the venom of slander, his attachment to earthly goods extreme, his aversion to suffering and death strong, even when they are softened by the devotion of those around him.—Prepare a cross, nail to it his feet and hands, give him gall and vinegar to drink, and before he expires by the most cruel and ignominious death, between two criminals, let him see his executioners dividing his garments, and the assembled people insulting his sorrows.

* Et velaverunt eum, &c. (Luke xxii. 64.)—Sprevit autem illum Herodes cum exercitu suo; et illusit indutum veste albâ. (Luke xxiii. 11.)

† Dinumeraverunt omnia ossa mea. (Ps. xxi. 18.)

CHAPTER XXXI.

DEATH OF THE GOD-MAN.—MORAL EFFECT OF THIS EVENT.
IS CHRISTIANITY THE WORK OF MAN OR OF GOD?

THE great sacrifice was drawing near its close, and the old man expiring under the blows of divine wrath, gave place to the new man.

In the great act which was to give birth to the children of God, no man must take part. Hence Mary stood by the cross, the nuptial couch of the new Adam, connecting himself by agonizing sufferings with the generation of the new family. "Woman," said Jesus to her, showing her all Christians in the beloved disciple, "behold thy son;" then he said to the disciple: "Behold thy mother."*

"*All is finished*," then exclaimed the Redeemer, and uttering a loud cry, he expired.†

All is finished: the effort which God made to unseal the eyes of men, exhausted all the resources of eternal wisdom and infinite love. If the sinner does not shudder at this terrible blow of the right hand of the Lord, if he dares yet to sport with crime, he can no longer allege his ignorance and say: "I did not know that sin was so great an evil."

"If it has been thus with the green tree," according to the simple and profound language of Jesus to the women of Jerusalem, "what will it be with the dry?"‡ That is, if the innocence of the son of Mary, and the supreme majesty which renders him equal to his Father,§ could not save him from the united wrath of heaven, earth and hell, because in

* Stabant autem juxta crucem Jesu Mater ejus, &c. (John xix. 25.)

† John xix. 30.

‡ Si in virido ligno hæc faciunt, in arido quid fiet? (Luke xxiii. 31.)

§ Non rapinam arbitratus est esse se æqualem Deo. (Philipp. ii. 6.)

his ineffable tenderness he has condescended to put himself in our place, what will then be our fate, unworthy creatures as we are, corrupt from our birth, and our lives only a tissue of iniquities! What compassion can we then expect if, after such a lesson, we still continue to sin! Inexorable judgment and devouring fire will be the inevitable portion of those who, crushing under foot the Son of God and profaning the blood of the new covenant, add to contempt of the law of God, contempt of his unspeakable compassion for sinners.*

Such enormities surpass the limits of human folly. Let the *good news* be published throughout the universe, that *God so loved the world, as to give his only begotten Son*, and that *he hates sin so much that he has punished it without mercy in his own Son, by whom it was only assumed*;† and henceforth there will be seen in the universe none but unbelievers and saints; for how could one believe this and sin!

To complete his work, the Saviour had then only to choose the means best adapted to diffuse and confirm the great tidings. Coming forth victorious from the tomb, he assembled his disciples, who were dispersed by fear, and commanded them to go and preach the gospel to all nations under the sun, promising to be with them all days, even to the consummation of the world.

He clothed them with such authority, that incredulity would be a folly and a crime.‡ To the power of enlightening and convincing the mind of man, he added that of healing the

* *Voluntariè enim peccantibus nobis post acceptam notitiam veritatis, jam non relinquitur pro peccatis hostia, terribilis autem quædam expectatio judicii, et ignis æmulatio . . . Qui filium Dei conculcaverit et sanguinem Testamenti pollutum duxerit, &c. (Heb. x. 26, seq.)*

† *Sic enim Deus dilexit mundum, ut Filium suum unigenitum daret. (John iii. 16.) Qui etiam proprio Filio suo non pepercit. (Rom. viii. 32.)*

‡ *Matth. xxviii. 19, 20.)*

§ *Qui verò non crediderit, condemnabitur. (Mark xvi. 16.)*

wounds and strengthening the weakness of the heart, by giving him a new life.

We shall examine elsewhere,* the admirable constitution of the evangelical ministry, and the wonderful efficacy of the remedies that its founder bestowed upon it for the salvation of the human race.

Let us now stop at these general facts with regard to Christianity, facts common to all Christian societies, and let us put this question :

Is Christianity an invention of man or of God?

CHAPTER XXXII.

UNIFORM CHARACTER OF THE WORKS OF MAN.

MAN has been at work three thousand years. What has he accomplished? Nothing that satisfies him, nothing that he has not himself undone. His creations are always wanting in truth, goodness, and beauty, and consequently are incapable of satisfying his three great desires of knowledge, power, and pleasure.

I. They are not true. Man has vainly boasted of discovering that fruitful, universal, fundamental truth, which, shedding great light on the moral and physical world, explains without difficulty our relations with God, our fellow-men and nature, gives the fundamental reason for the divine, human and material phenomena, and concentrates in its luminous unity, religious, social and natural science. What has he discovered? Some few glimpses of truth, so feeble and so uncertain, that they are soon extinguished in the thick darkness of skepticism.

* In the *Second Problem*:

Review all the schools of philosophy, not Christian, from the earlier Grecian to those which we see in our age springing up and dying out by hundreds; may we not ask of them, if there is any one truth whatever to be recognized among them all? How many contradictions concerning the Divine Being! What profound ignorance of man! What pitiable weakness concerning the highest questions of physical science. Let those who have read with intelligent eyes the innumerable geological and physical systems of all ages, tell us if they have not believed themselves listening to a circle of Hottentots, reasoning on the construction and motion of a watch or a musical box.

II. They are not good. How can those, who are ignorant of the origin and destiny of man, conduct him to happiness! Aside from some beautiful maxims of morality taken from ancient tradition, how much that is vile is to be found even in the divine Plato. How much disgraceful groping in the judicious author of the *Tusculan questions*! What stoical pedantry in the would-be christian Seneca! We do not speak of the moralists of the eighteenth century, who saw *no other difference than that of habit between man and his dog*.

Domestic and public social life being necessarily only the realization of religious and moral doctrines, we can form an idea of what this was, and what it still is among nations of human training. Wo to the weak! Is the cry which rises from all families and all classes of society.

III. They are not beautiful. We will not dispute with the human mind its progress in the useful and agreeable arts, although it has been historically demonstrated that the great achievements and inventions in the department of the beautiful, must be referred back to the religious ages; but disgust to life has always been in proportion to the efforts man has made to embellish his terrestrial existence and multiply its enjoyments. Suicide proves the truth of this assertion.

Finally, falseness and incoherence, poverty and misery, weariness and disgust, are the invariable results of the works of man. To say that such an artizan has constructed Christianity, is like asserting that five or six Hurons, taken to Rome as a spectacle, built the Basilica of St. Peter, sculptured the Apollo Belvidere, painted the Transfiguration of Raphael and the galleries of the Vatican.

What in fact is Christianity? It is truth without error, goodness, without a mixture of evil, and beauty without defect; all three however temporarily concealed by the veil of faith. It has enlightened the world, and procured for it all the blessings and enjoyments compatible with our state of trial. Is it not obvious from this, that it is the creation or rather the reflection of Him who is the All-True, the All-Good, the All-Beautiful!

But this must be proved, for ignorance will not credit it, and ignorance in matters of religion is more common than is generally believed.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SUMMARY PROOF OF THE TRUTH AND DIVINITY OF CHRISTIANITY.

For eighteen centuries Christianity has shown itself to man in every aspect, fearing nothing so much as not to be known.* Declaring deadly war as it has done upon all the bad passions, it could not fail powerfully to excite human curiosity. No doctrine has ever been examined with more care, or been combatted with more power and variety of means.

Pagan Rome armed against it, during three centuries, her

* *Unum gestit interdum, ne ignorata damnetur.* (Tertull. *Apologet.* I.)

sophists, magistrates and executioners. Rome having prostrated herself with her emperors at the foot of the cross, heresy at first insolently raised its head, and successively attacked every dogma. Supported by sovereign power, she also united the sword to sophistry. Yet heresy slept during the middle ages? The Rationalism of the university succeeded to it and submitted all truths to the hammer of logic. In the sixteenth century the battle was fought at the very foundations of Christian society, and Protestantism made the strongest effort to uproot this mighty tree.

Finally, the philosophy of the last century, concentrating in the heart of its leader, all its hatred against the religion of Christ, commenced the most skilful, general, long and furious attack that it is possible to conceive. Theology, philosophy, jurisprudence, history, chronology, archeology, geography, philology, literature, natural philosophy, mathematics, astronomy, geology, chemistry, and even the fine arts, were all arrayed against the so-called work of fanaticism and superstition. Reasoning, discussion, ridicule, calumny, raillery and insult were employed. Whatever was most specious in science and erudition, most seducing in elegance, most withering in satire, most low and obscene in the imagination of the novelist, everything was simultaneously put in use to sever with eternal contempt and ridicule the faith, morality, practices, government, institutions and history of Christianity.

A great advantage was given to the assailants, by the fact that the christian camp defended by many brave spirits, numbered very few heroes. Her Sampson had disappeared with the seventeenth century, and those who were to raise their clubs, were waiting for the dawn of the nineteenth. Here and there were seen, respectable writers and learned apologists, very skilful in unveiling a sophism, and capable of illustrating truth; but none were found who could hurl the thunderbolt.

Material force lent its aid to philosophy. The persecuting decrees of rebellious Parliaments were succeeded by the spoiling and schismatic decrees of the Constituent Assembly. The Legislative Assembly inflicted banishment, then aided by an army of executioners, they murdered, tortured and disembowelled the priests, and bore their hearts through the streets singing; "*There is no festival where hearts are wanting.*"* The Convention came with the guillotine, the bullet, the drowning and hammer of the destroyers. The Directory caused the Pope to die in chains, sent the priests to perish in Guiana, and pensioned Parry for his infernal rhymes.

What do we see now? Paganism has disappeared with her sophists and her executioners. Heresies one after another have been buried in the dust with their doctrines of a day, and the violent edicts of their propagators. The Rationalism of the schools has disappeared in the void of its thoughts and the clouds of its logic. Protestantism is dying of imbecility, and sees those of her children who are strong enough to resist the torrent of *Naturalism*, delicate enough to retreat before the mire of *Methodism*, returning back to Rome. The philosophy of Voltaire is no longer in fashion. Entirely stupified since the Jacobins have gorged it with blood, it has retired with them into the dens of masonry. Its present occupation is to exhume from the literary rubbish of the last century, some vile fragments of irreligion and obscenity, to rave in low journals against the party of the priesthood, and to lie in wait in the street for an opportunity to break a cross, or plunder a church.

Christianity stands erect in the midst of the tombs of its enemies, with its doctrines, its annals, its worship, its indestructible constitution. It is seated in the high places of our capitals, and displaying boldly its sacred books over which the ink of heresy and philosophy has flowed in torrents with-

* See Chateaubriand, *Genie du Christianisme*, liv. iv. ch. 8.

out effacing a syllable, it always asks with its divine founder; "*Which of you shall convict me of sin?*"* and in the immense and learned audience which throngs Notre Dame and Saint Sulpice, not a man dares to accept the challenge.

We must then agree that Christianity is faultless; for if it contained an error, it has excited the human mind too much to allow it to escape detection, it has dealt too hardly with the passions to be pardoned.

It is in vain that man and time are leagued together to destroy it: it is then neither the work of man nor of time.

But let us enter into some details.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHARACTER OF TRUTH.

THE characteristic of truth is its harmony with itself and with all that is, for a very simple reason, but one that is little comprehended, that truth *is that which is*.

Now Christianity possesses, in an eminent degree this characteristic of truth. Harmonious in itself, it harmonizes with everything else. Nothing is foreign to it. It is the central truth around which other truths must revolve under penalty of becoming *false*; † it is the universal phenomenon which alone explains other phenomena. Let us proceed to show the intrinsic harmony of the Christian system.

* Quis ex vobis arguet me de peccato? (John viii. 46.)

† Error is nothing and can be nothing but a truth displaced, detached from its principle, *erratic*.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DIVINITY OF THE BIBLE, PROVED BY ITS UNITY.

THE Bible, as every one knows, is the great depository of the Christian doctrines. The most eloquent pens, even among skeptics, have celebrated the divine power which shines forth from this wonderful book, that *has conquered the world by condemning the world*.*

One man, overwhelmed by the majesty of the Scriptures, concludes that the *inventor* of the Gospel *would be more remarkable than its hero*.†

Another asks, from whence does the Bible receive that inexhaustible wealth of knowledge and feeling which prevents us from ever being weary of reading it; and the charm which increases as we read it again, while the most beautiful books that come forth from the hand of man, lose their interest in proportion as we study them.‡

The latter asks how the sacred writers have freed themselves from all narrow egotism, and are only animated with the desire of glorifying God and instructing men; how they have chosen expressions so simple and popular, when announcing such sublime and magnificent facts concerning the Divine Being. "Certainly," adds he, "if these learned men were like others, they would express themselves more nobly, having minds adequate to the comprehension of things so great, or their thoughts would be more common, not having minds capable of expressing themselves in a more elevated manner."§

* La Harpe, *Discours sur l'Esprit des Livres Saints*.

† J. J. Rousseau.

‡ Bogue, *Essai sur la divine autorité du Nouveau Testament*, ch. ii. sect. v.

§ Abbadie, *Traité de la vérité de la Religion chrétienne*, sec. iii. ch. 2.

The former is astonished that in the same books, where the highest and purest ideas of the Divinity are found without any alloy, in books filled with the most profound reverence for God, and the most religious fear of God, the Most High is represented as treating man like a friend, entering into discussion with him as with an equal, and yet the veneration and submission of man are never weakened by so extraordinary an intercourse; "This is for me," he says, "a moral demonstration of the Divine inspiration, and should be, for every man of sense and sincerity, at least a subject of examination and reflection."*

Another is justly struck with the astonishing difference of style which prevails in the two Testaments, and discovers in them a naturally divine harmony between the language and the facts.† But among all the characteristics of a super-human origin which the Bible presents, there is none more manifest than its unity.

The Bible is composed of seventy-two books, by nearly forty different authors, the first of whom preceded the last by at least fifteen centuries. These writers widely separated from each other by time, place, and condition; some reared

* La Harpe, Discourse quoted above.

† In the prophets there is something ardent and impassioned, as it were a laboring with desire to attain a good which they do not possess, and after which all their soul aspires: they invoke it in the accents of love and hope; they demand of the future what is to save the world; they soar above to seek it; they ascend to the highest heaven where the Most High dwells . . . In the gospel, there is the calmness of possession, the rapturous peace which follows a vast desire satisfied, the tranquil serenity of heaven itself . . . Take any man whatever: let him relate that event, so long the object of all desires, the impenetrable mystery of mercy and justice; his language will be imposing, sublime, and affecting. Read the gospel: "At this time there went forth a decree from Cesar Augustus, &c." (Luke ii. 1.) Lamennais; *Essai sur l'Indifférence*, ch. xxxii.

in the palaces of kings, others in the courts of a temple, others in the cabin of a shepherd or a fisherman, have chosen the most vast and elevated subjects that can be presented to human thought, God, man, the universe; but each has treated it under a different point of view, and in a manner peculiar to himself.

Some, occupying themselves with the past and the present, have related in general or particular narratives, Divine and human actions; others, penetrating into the future, have announced the designs of God concerning the children of men, and foretold the destinies of nations and individuals. The latter have sung in poetry of consummate beauty,* the greatness of God and the misery of man. The former have given rules of conduct, for all conditions, ages, and circumstances of life. The same author often appears as historian, poet, prophet and moralist.

And yet in this immense body of facts collected by so many pens, in this world of thought and feeling proceeding from such a variety of minds, criticism the most minute, and often the most malevolent, has been seeking, for eighteen hundred years in vain, for a single contradiction. More than once the skeptic has flattered himself that he could convict our sacred Books of discrepancies and falsehood; more than once the learned and pious interpreter has been alarmed by certain apparent incongruities: but a more extensive and profound examination of the sacred text has destroyed the triumph of the one and the terror of the other, and nothing has as yet been demonstrated but the ignorance of the censors of the Bible.

* The most distinguished scholar of modern times has said that "true poets will certainly never dispute with the Holy Spirit, the palm of poetic *genius*," and he has sufficiently proved it, (*La Harpe, Discours sur l'Esprit des Livres saints*, 2e. part. Dr. South has demonstrated the same proposition in his beautiful book, *De Sacra poesi Hebræorum*.

This perfect harmony of the sacred writers is a phenomenon humanly inexplicable. Would you, in order to explain it, diminish the number of sacred authors? Will you say with Voltaire, that three quarters at least of the Old Testament are the work of Edras, and does not go back farther than the captivity of Babylon. Besides the absurdities you will be obliged to accept by contradicting, on so fundamental a point the common fault of the Jews and Samaritans;* besides the manifest violence done to the first laws of criticism, by attributing to the same author several productions so very unlike, whom could you persuade that, of all known writers, Esdras alone has escaped the anathema which falls upon every prolific pen: *Errors are proportioned to the number of writings?* †

Will it be said that there was concert among these writers, and that the last in the order of time have blindly followed the first? Their number, their distance in the scale of time and society, their evident character of originality, and the diversity of matters they treat, preclude necessarily all idea of collusion. Besides how are we to explain in these men a self renunciation so entire, as to allow them to place themselves in the train of each other. How could they have sufficiently understood each other not to clash in anything, when among the innumerable commentators they have had, we do not find two who agree in every thing, and not one who does not contradict himself.

* The powerful antagonism which always prevailed between the Jews properly so called, and the tribes which, under Roboam, formed the kingdom of Samaria, evidently proves that the five books of Moses, the only ones which the Samaritans receive, are anterior to the schism of the ten tribes, and go back consequently to more than ten centuries before the captivity of Babylon. We find, in the 19th volume of the *Annales des Voyages*, a curious dissertation of M. Sylvestre de Sacy, upon the *Pentateuque des Samaritains*, and the remains of that peculiar nation. (See *Annales de Philosophie Chrétienne*, &c. t. iv. p. 241.)

† In multiloquio non deerit peccatum. (Prov. x. 19.)

Whatever attempt may be made to explain away this miracle, it will return as soon as it is rejected. There is but one possible explanation: *The Bible is the work of one and the same Spirit, employing in succession forty different scribes, and dictating to each whatever it sees fit.**

CHAPTER XXXVI.

DIVINE HARMONY OF THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM CONSIDERED IN ITSELF.

THE attentive reader must have already observed that all the Christian doctrines which have hitherto been explained are naturally linked together. A single article cannot be taken away without disturbing the others.

The Bible shows us, in the first place, God drawing the universe from nothing. To give a head to the material universe, he created man *in his own image and likeness*. These expressions and the complacency with which he fashions this work, announce to us the nobility of the youngest of created beings, and the high destiny which awaits him.

Man must be tested, before God can say to him: "I recognize thee for my son, come, share my throne." The leader of the rebellion which had before taken place among the elder members of the family, creeps into Eden. Woman seduced, leads man astray. Sin begins its work of ignominy and death.† God intervenes, and in the twenty-four verses of the third chapter of Genesis, is found the reason for all the divine and human facts which will succeed each other until the "It

* *Hæc autem omnia operatur unus atque idem Spiritus, dividens singulis prout vult.* (I. Cor. xii. 11.)

† *Et aperti sunt oculi amborum, &c.* (Gen. iii. 9.)

is finished" of Calvary, and from thence onward, until these words which will close the series of ages: "Come ye blessed of my Father, &c.; go ye cursed into everlasting fire," &c.

In this we see the extreme perversity of Satan, and the fatal, though divinely restrained influence which he has acquired over the inhabitants of the earth.* We see in it the incredible weakness of man and the ruinous action of sin. We see the flaming sword of God's justice† shining, and the light of his infinite compassion dawning.‡

Man being far from God, and God being occupied with bringing him back to himself, everything in the progress of humanity and in the divine government, is co-ordinate with these two principles of degradation and restoration. On one side the progress of error and crime; on the other an always increasing manifestation of light and holiness, until the uncreated light and the Holiest of the Holy, assumed humanity and ushered in the great day.

Then God becomes better known; at first in his essence, The divine personalities hardly seen in the act of creation, which was common to all three§ are clearly revealed in the work of the redemption, by a distinct action. God is better known in his works and his designs concerning the children of men. His partiality towards the Jews in the government of the world, the singularity of the laws and destinies of this people is explained. The implacable enmity of God against sin, his unspeakable compassion for the sinner, before manifested by so many chastisements and so many favors, were exhibited with amazing power on Calvary.

Man also must know himself. He has often asked this question without being able to resolve it; "WHAT AM I?"

* Et tu insidiaberis calcaneo ejus. (Gen. iii. 15.)

† Flammeum gladium. (Gen. iii. 24.)

‡ Inimicitias ponam. (Gen. iii. 15.)

§ Faciamus hominem, &c. (Gen. i. 26.)

Pilate when he presented Jesus to him, in the lowest degree of degradation and about to suffer the most cruel death, answered him; "Behold what thou art and what thou meritest." The crucified One, having come forth from the tomb, and seated at the right hand of the Father in the midst of his glory, said to him also: "Behold what thou canst become, if thou consentest to follow me." Can he still say that he has seen neither heaven which is promised to him, nor hell with which he is threatened? The cross is before him to aid him in measuring with perfect exactness the infinite height of the throne promised to his obedience, and the no less deep dungeons destined for the punishment of his rebellion.

The admirable harmony which exists between the dogmas and facts of Christianity, (for Christianity is entirely historical) exists also between its dogmas and its morality, and leads back all parts of the latter to unity. The moral precepts come forth from the doctrine, as branches from their trunk, and among all its shoots not one parasite is found.

Since union with God is our final end, it is natural that our intellect should be united to the thoughts of the divine intellect by faith, and that our heart should be drawn towards the superior good, by hope and love. Charity, who when the clear view and possession of God shall have taken the place of Faith and Hope must be the foundation of the christian Decalogue, will alone survive her two elder sisters: hence all the prescriptions of the latter turn upon the love of God and our neighbor, and in the infinity of moral sentences which the Bible contains, there is not one which does not tend to detach man from the earth, and make him walk in peace towards God.*

Morality in the new law, follows in exact proportion the developments of the doctrine. The evangelical counsels

* *Plenitudo ergo legis est dilectio.* (Rom. xiii. 10.)

themselves are not an innovation, but the perfection of the ancient precepts: "*Think not,*" said Jesus Christ, "*that I come to do away with the law or the prophets: far from that, I come to fulfil them.*"*

CHAPTER XXXVII.

CONTINUATION.—OTHER INTERNAL PROOFS OF THE DIVINE ORIGIN OF THE CHRISTIAN SYSTEM.

I WOULD ask again of every man of sense, if such a harmony in the combination of the most vast and profound system, among writers pursuing their labors at so great a distance from each other, is not the greatest prodigy of the moral order?

The world has never yet seen two philosophers coming forth from the same school, laboring side by side upon the same subject who have written two pages which do not contradict each other. Still farther, among the number of great writers, there are few who are constantly faithful to their principles, and he is always the most logical who has the fewest contradictions. And here are forty, who, without the intervention of God, have had marvellous skill in composing an immense collection of histories and poetry, and of moral and dogmatic philosophy, in which the human mind for nearly two thousand years has vainly been seeking to detect an error! But this is the Basilica of the Vatican, this is Rome with its master-pieces of art, built by some Hurons equipped with their modern hatchets and their knives of stone, and each working apart.

Among a thousand proofs of the divine assistance, see how

* Matth v. 17.

successfully the sacred writers have constantly avoided the numerous rocks, against which all human logic has been wrecked. They everywhere show us God as the Universal Being, He who alone is, without falling in a single instance into pantheism. It is God who effects all things in us, who gives life and motion both to our organs and to our superior faculties: there is no good thought, no right intention that does not come from Him;* and yet human liberty is entirely preserved.

Philosophy has never been able to address man in language adapted to his wants. Sometimes it swells his pride, and leads him into presumption by the exaggerated praises and the too good opinion that it gives him of himself, sometimes it debases and disgusts him by the sternness and bitterness of its censures. The Bible, on the contrary, shows man his excessive weakness, and his extreme corruption, but always without despising, degrading or crushing him. If it humbles him so far as to recognize that of himself he is nothing, it is in order to raise him to God. In fact it describes us as we are, escaped from nonentity and destined to reign in heaven.

In its morality there is no exaggeration. If in some places counsels seem confounded with precepts, in others they are carefully distinguished.

In the deadly war which the Gospel wages against pride, it would have been natural that it should seek to crush human personality as the sophists of India and the christian Quietists have done. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, with thy whole soul, and with thy whole mind:"† does this first precept leave room for the love

* In ipso enim vivimus, et movemur, et sumus. (Acts xvii. 28.) Non quòd sufficientes simus cogitare aliquid à nobis, &c. (II. Cor. iii. 5.) Deus est enim, qui operatur in vobis et velle, et perficere, pro bonâ voluntate. (Philipp. ii. 13.)

† This precept which includes all Christian morality, is in itself a true miracle. It commands in truth, the most just and legitimate sen-

of self? does it not annihilate all self-seeking? Besides it contains the dogma which teaches that man, having received everything from God, and possessing in his own right only nonentity, must forget himself totally in order to love God alone. Yet the Evangelists avoid this logically inevitable sophism, and they sanctify that legitimate source of self-love which the Creator has placed within us by subjecting it to divine love. While they exhort us to love God on account of his unspeakable goodness, they still more frequently invite us to it by the allurements of the celestial rewards.

Tell me who has prevented the fishermen of Nazareth from falling upon that keen edged blade, against which the swan of Cambray stumbled and the eagle of Meaux wavered! Where shall we find God if not here.

Let us pass on to the external harmony of Christianity.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PROFOUND HARMONY OF CHRISTIANITY WITH MAN.—THE ONLY SOURCE OF INCREDULITY.

WE have already shown that Christianity is in wonderful harmony with man. What we have laid down in regard to its doctrine concerning the origin and destiny of man, has been drawn less from the Bible than from the depths of our nature.

There is not a principle of reason which is not allied to aiments for (what is more worthy of love than God!) but this sentiment is at the same time the most extraordinary, the most foreign to the heart of man, (what is less loved than God!) It is not man who prescribed this.

* I. Peter ii. 11.

religious truth; there is not a fibre in our heart, which does not send forth a Christian sound, when touched by a skilful hand.

The most profound mysteries of religion find their impress in us. We cannot reject them without denying ourselves.

The sin of Adam lives yet in the human heart, and incessantly fomented in it the conspiracy of the flesh against the spirit.

The divine Trinity is faithfully reproduced in the three faculties, really distinct from each other, which compose the indivisible unity of the Soul!*

The existence of the God-man, that is to say, the union of a divine person with our nature, finds its analogy in the no less mysterious union of the soul with the body, which produces also the *intelligent animal*.

We may well say to unbelievers, with the prophet: "Oh Fools, who cannot believe, return to your own hearts."

Man is naturally a christian. It is also a very remarkable fact, but established by innumerable experiments that unbelievers to whom the christian creed is proposed for the first time, admit it with extreme facility. Those mysteries which our triflers esteem so revolting to their reason appear to them so natural, that they do not even demand the proof of them. It is only when the painful and austere theory of duty is presented to them, that they recoil, and even then they will render homage to the evangelical doctrine. Your religion is beautiful, and good, and of more value than ours; but "the stomach

* For the psychologically—human trinity, composed hitherto of *thoughts* or of *being*, of *knowledge* and of *love*, a contemporaneous thinker has judged it advisable to substitute *sentiment*, *imagination*, and *reason*, (*La Théorie de l'Âme*, &c., by J. C. Docteur, published at first at Nancy, and re-printed at Moutiers, 1841.) The arrogant tone of the author and certain extravagant assertions might give offence; but it cannot be denied that his *sentiment* presents, with all the treasures of a brilliant *imagination*, a great fund of *reason*.

† Redite, prævaricatores, ad cor. (Is. xlvi. 8.)

must be filled," answers the gluttonous Brahmin to the missionary.* "How can you require of me to keep to one wife?" answered the voluptuous Asiatic. "How can you command me to forgive my enemies and those of my tribe?" says the ferocious savage.

The great and sole enemies of Christianity are the bad passions, "Rid yourself of your passions, and you will believe," Paschal has said.

Is this doubted? When does faith desert the heart? When the passions begin their tumult in it. When does it return? When old age or the presence of death restores its calmness. A man never attacks the Creed until he has made a breach in the Decalogue.

Finally, and this is decisive, I could show you a multitude of unbelievers, of sound mind, who became Christians at the hour of death, and others more obstinate who at least hesitated. Show me one Christian who became an infidel at this formidable moment, or who has thought of putting to himself the question: "Have I done well to believe."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

HISTORICAL REALITY OF CHRISTIANITY.—GERMAN COMMENTATORS.—NATURALISTS.—MYTHOLOGUES.—STRAUSS.

BUT may not Christianity be a wisely constructed Utopia, a romance well invented to captivate the mind and heart, and which has no better pretention to be true than that it is not wholly false. Are the marvellous events upon which it is

* This is the favorite expression of the Brahmins, a cast whose veracity equals their duplicity, (See *Mœurs, Institutions et Cérémonies des peuples de l'Inde*, by M. Dubois, vol. I. p. 384.)

founded, ingenious dreams, bold transformations of natural facts; which we owe to an enthusiastic credulity or to the warmth of oriental brains; or are they historical realities? In a word, is Christianity an Arabian tale, a myth or a history?

Senseless question! You who ask it, endeavor to shake this historical Colossus which begins with the words: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," and finishes with the Acts of the Apostles; a Colossus whose foundation underlies everywhere at different depths, the historico—fabulous structures of antiquity, and around which all modern history gravitates!

There are, however, men to be met with, or beings at least who call themselves such, who have not shrunk from this more than Titanic enterprize. I will say nothing of the deceased M. Dupuis and his entirely deceased extravagances. Peace to buried absurdities so long as we have living ones!

I wish to speak of the German Commentators, some of them naturalists, and others mythologues, who see nothing in the Bible but natural facts in oriental clothing, or learned myths.

According to the former, nothing is more simple than the recital of the sacred writers, even in the most extraordinary particulars, when they are reduced to their just value. For example. The tree of good and evil, about which so much noise has been made, was only a poisonous plant, a tree bearing hurtful fruits, probably a poisonous apple-tree, under the shade of which the first man and woman were so unfortunate as to fall asleep. The voice which sounded on Sinai, in the midst of thunders and lightnings and terrified the Hebrews, was the voice of Moses, who by an instrument availed himself of a great storm to harangue his followers. The fire which surrounded the summit of the mountain for forty days, was either a volcanic eruption, or the brazier at which the skilful legislator warmed his benumbed fingers, while he was

writing his code of laws. If his countenance appeared radiant to the people, it was because he came out of a cloud charged with electricity.

Let us pass on to the New Testament. The royal magi with their offerings were simply travelling merchants, who brought some small copper coins to the child at Bethlehem. The star was the lantern of the domestic who conducted them. The angels who ministered to our Lord after the temptation in the wilderness, were Arabs who were passing by, supplied with provisions. When it is said that Jesus walked upon the sea and calmed the tempest, it is to be understood that he swam and managed a rudder skilfully. When he fed the five hundred in the wilderness, it must be supposed that he had prepared there, magazines of provisions, or that he politely invited his audience to eat the bread which each one had in his pocket. Would you know how he persuaded his disciples that he ascended into heaven? He led them to a mountain covered with thick fog, where, after some parting words, he left these good people, and escaped by another way. How did these imagine that they had received the Holy Spirit? A violent gale of wind having rent the house where they were assembled, fear made them see the stars, and disturbed their brain.

This is a slight specimen of the ingenious subtleties, by which the naturalistic theologians of Germany have succeeded in giving us a sacred history, a Bible, without God, without angels, without devils, and without miracles.*

* He who wishes to form an idea of the principles of the Naturalistic interpretation, without being condemned to read the long and wearisome productions of Gabler, Bauer, Daub, Semler, Griesbach, Wegscheider, &c., may satisfy himself by reading the *Preface* and the *Observations*, with which Christopher Frederic Ammon has enriched the fifth edition, of the already very naturalistic work of the celebrated Ernesti: *Institutio Interpretis. Novi Testamenti, Lipsic*, 1809.

Their comrades, the mythologues, ridicule this mode of dissecting the Bible, and think it more expedient to see in the two Testaments only a crude collection of allegorical rhapsodies, tacked together in succession, and in which it is as impossible to discover historical truth as in the Iliad and Odyssey of Homer, or the metamorphoses of Ovid.

Dr. David Frederick Strauss who had seen all the historical personages of the Old Testament, from Jehovah to the last of the prophets, fall successively under the blows of his predecessors in biblical mythology, wished to complete so fine an undertaking, by giving to the world the whole mythology of the Gospel in his *Life of Jesus*.^{*} The evangelical history according to him, contains nothing really true but certain particulars of the life and doctrine of a pretender to the title of Messiah, particulars to which the disciples of this impostor added all the Scriptures and Jewish traditions afforded them relative to the personage he wished to represent.

Finally, the naturalistic commentators consider the first disciples of Moses and Jesus as imbecile persons, sunk in the lowest degree of idiocy; the mythologues make them to be both fools and knaves.

The two systems, as it will be seen, have this advantage, that they destroy with one blow, the disagreeable morality of the Gospel. It remains now to be explained how fools and knaves have been heroic enough to allow themselves to be stoned, burned, crucified and beheaded; how they have been dexterous enough to entrap the most reasonable and enlightened classes of the world, and in fact all classes; how they have been enabled to indoctrinate their first disciples so thoroughly, that Ignatius sighed after the lions, Polycarp went

^{*} Printed at first in 1835, and re-printed for the third time in 1839. See a very remarkable article of M. Edgard Quinet, (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, Dec. 1st, 1838,) on that infamous production, and on the causes which have prepared its introduction upon the theatre of German Theology.

cheerfully to the funeral pile, Justin, Irenæus and Cyprian sealed their learned pages with their blood, and Tertullian wrote tranquilly his immortal Apology under the axe of the executioner; how among the innumerable Christians who from the second century filled all parts of the empire except the temples of the false gods,* there were found many millions who gave themselves up to death in order to sustain the labors of these fools and liars; in short, how this gross imposture could have met with so many sublime defenders, from the first of the Holy Fathers to the present time

“I see you are much embarrassed,” replied Strauss; “do you not know that the true interpretation goes no farther back than to Gabler in 1792,† and that without the labors of Eichorn, Bauer, Daub, Herder, Neander, Hegel, Schleiermacher, De Wette, Vatke, Böhlen, Lengerke, &c., reason and good sense would never have penetrated into Christian creeds!” But we answer, whoever values his title of reasonable would reply: “Strauss evidently takes advantage of the permission to rave which the schools beyond the Rhine that have sprung from the *pure reason* of Kant arrogate to themselves:” this is in truth pride carried to the transcendental degree of folly. Among a people not wholly brutalized, the author of so violent an outrage upon the two hundred and sixty millions of Christians who cover the globe, and the nine thousand millions at least who have preceded us, instead of finding a chain of theology,‡ would have been attached by the hand of the executioner to the manger of the first stable, with the leaves of his book for a litter, or put into a straight jacket in an insane hospital.

* Tertullian, *Apologet.*

† It is to Gabler, in fact, that Strauss traces the origin of the mythical interpretation. (See *Introduction*, p. 59.)

‡ Zurich at first nominated Strauss, by a majority, as professor of dogmatic theology. At the earnest protest of the Canton, the election was annulled. Honor to the protestors! Eternal shame to the electors!

CHAPTER XL.

A WORD CONCERNING THE AUTHENTICITY AND VERACITY
OF THE MOSAIC BOOKS.

THE plan of a work like this, does not permit me to develop, or even to allude to the innumerable proofs which carry the authenticity and veracity of the biblical history to the highest imaginable degree of certainty, proofs contained in works translated into all languages, and which still await a refutation. Would those read me, who have not read the master-pieces of criticism and reasoning of Huet, Leland, Abbadie, Sherlock, Stateer, Hooke, Jenyns, Lyttleton, Erskine, West, Bogue, Houtteville, Bergier, Valsecchi, Duvoisin, Frayssinous, Lamennais, and an infinity of others ! and what importance would those who have read them attach to my repetition of them ! I will limit myself to a few reflections.

One word, in the first place, concerning the Jewish history, the mother of the evangelical history.

Before thinking of casting doubts upon the existence of the greatest personage of this history, Moses, and upon the authenticity and veracity of the five first books of the Bible, common sense would dictate two things to be done : 1st, to burn, even to the last copy, all the authors of profane antiquity who have spoken of Moses as the legislator and first historian of the Jews ;* 2d, to destroy all the Jews themselves.

In fact, so long as we have any families of this nation to prove that the Jews are men made like others, that they have eyes to see, ears to hear, minds to judge, and hearts to feel ;

* The historian Josephus, in his books against Appion ; and the first Christian Apologists, Justin, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, &c., cite a great number of them. We have even in our own libraries Strabo, Diodorus Siculus, Longinus, Justin, Juvenal, Tacitus, Pliny, &c.

that they have like ourselves a self-love which ill brooks humiliations and unjust preferences; that they have passions hostile to constraint, it would be impossible to believe that an impostor could have been able to attach them so closely to a law at all times insupportable,* and which for eighteen centuries has covered them with ignominy.

Would this impostor then, whose superior talents cannot be disputed by one who reads his works, have been so clumsy as to disturb the self-love of those whom he wished to deceive, by innumerable recitals dishonorable to the nation in general, and to individuals in particular, and would he have based upon these narrations the division of functions and territories in his republic! Could he have been so foolish as to found the supreme power, which he arrogated to himself, upon miracles of the first order, miracles which he professes to have performed before the eyes of the whole people!

Would that impostor have dared to say to the Jews, that with his rod he had struck Egypt with ten unheard of plagues; that he had given them power to cross the Red Sea dry shod; that he had given them to drink, water miraculously flowing from a rock; that he fed them for forty years with manna which had fallen from heaven; that they had seen Sinai tremble and burst forth in flames under the footsteps of the Lord, and that they had not been able to endure the sound of the voice which descended from it; that at the foot of this same mountain they had the folly to prostrate themselves before a golden calf; that they had seen the envious rivals of his brother, Core, Dathan, and Abiram, swallowed up alive in the earth, and their accomplices consumed by fire from heaven; that God had punished them for their frequent rebellion, sometimes by a sudden mortality, sometimes by the bite of fiery serpents, and sometimes by the sword of their enemies, &c.?

* Jugum . . . neque patres nostri, neque nos portare potuimus.
(Acts xv. 16.)

This is not all: would he have taken these events as a basis for his religious institutions, and would most of the feasts and ceremonies which he imposed upon his subjects have been a solemn commemoration of these enormous impostures? In short, would he have concluded this work of the most consummate folly by these words: "Your eyes have seen all the great works of the Lord that he hath done."*

This is what Moses, or any other conjurer must have said, written and done, in the presence of two millions of men;† and yet among so many families wounded in their pretensions and their pride, among so many men whose common sense had received so violent an insult, no one raised his voice, no one uttered that cry, then so legitimate, but afterwards so criminal: "We will not have this man to reign over us." All submitted with the docility of children, blessed the name of the imposter, and preserved with indescribable veneration his work. Every year, during fifteen centuries, we see them all, men, women, and children, thronging from the different parts of Palestine, and even from the most distant regions, to celebrate the feasts of the Passover, of Tabernacles and of Trumpets, which could only recal to them the arts of imposture. In short, after eighteen hundred years, this nation, which has seen all other nations pass away, and still itself remain, sacrificed to its religion all that man holds most dear, honor and interest.

I ask of every man capable of reflecting, would not so

* *Oculi vestri viderunt omnia opera Domini magna quæ fecit.* (Deut. xi. 7.)

† The six hundred thousand combatants who are spoken of in the Pentateuch, require at least this proportion of the general population. As for the rest, to whatever epoch we may wish to refer the introduction of the law among the Jews, we shall be obliged to confess that this law presupposes a numerous people.

‡ Luke xix. 14.

much effrontery on one side, and so much stupidity on the other, be a prodigy a thousand times more incredible than all the prodigies of the old and new Testament! Skeptics, who are forced to admit the first, at least acknowledge that if you do not believe the others, it is not because you are wanting in credulity.

CHAPTER XLI.

PROPHETIC BOOKS.—THEIR AUTHENTICITY.—ANSWER TO AN OBJECTION.

THE evangelical history, among other peculiarities, has this remarkable one, that it was written many years before the birth of its hero. The person and the office of the Messiah, so vague in the revelations made to the patriarchs, is sketched and developed with a continually increasing precision under the pen of David and the sixteen prophets, the last of whom, Malachi, wrote more than three hundred years before the Christian era.

This son of the woman, promised to Adam,* is the son of God himself, uniting the greatness of Jehovah with the weakness of humanity,† seated on high at the right hand of the Father, and trampled under foot by the populace of Jerusalem as a worm of the dust.‡ Not only we find in this history the principal circumstances of his life and death, and the immense revolution which they produced, but even the least particulars concerning them, as the year and place of his birth, his entrance into Jerusalem on an ass, the treachery of his disciple, the reward which he obtained from it, the employment of this sum, the gall and vinegar he drank, the

* Gen. iii. 15. † Jer. xxiii. 5, 6.—xxxiii. 15, 16. ‡ Ps. xxi.—cix.

piercing of his feet and hands, the dividing his garments, the lot cast for his coat, &c.

What is really very annoying to the Naturalistic theologians, and to the opponents of the Divine intervention, is, that this wholly miraculous part of the evangelical history is absolutely unassailable. It is impossible to say that it was invented after the time, so long as the Jews are extant with the book of the prophets.

To suppose that the first disciples of Jesus, after having invented the prophecies, paid some Rabbi for translating them into Hebrew, that traversing afterwards all the regions of the globe, where the Jews had been dispersed from before the ruin of Jerusalem, they had engaged the irreconcilable enemies of the Christian name, to insert in their sacred books, those dreams which were to cover them with an eternal ignominy, would be too much for the belief even of the German commentators.* This then is the alternative, and there is nothing between exterminating the Jews or recognizing the authenticity of the prophetic books.

There remains the objection already a thousand times overthrown, that the prophecies are full of obscurity, that the picture which Christian apologists here and there make of them, are composed only of traits collected at random, and violently detached from the context; that, if the prophecies were so clear, the Jews would have yielded to their evidence; in short, that the coincidence, occasionally very remarkable, of many passages of the prophets with the life of Jesus Christ, is nothing more than the accident of chance.

The reproach of obscurity in the prophecies, and want of faithfulness in the compilation, which the defenders of Chris-

* "This book, (the Prophecies,) which in so many ways dishonors the Jews, they preserve at the expense of their life; this is a sincerity which has no example in the world nor root in nature." (Pascal, *Pensées*, ch. viii.)

tianity have made of them, falls of itself before the reading of the prophets and the apologists; above all of the learned Bishop of Avranches, whose *Démonstration évangélique* excited the enthusiasm of Leibnitz and the learned men of Europe.* It falls, too, before the fact of the belief universally diffused both among the Jews and Gentiles, at the moment when Jesus Christ came into the world, that Judea was about to give to the universe a master who would bring back the golden age, a belief celebrated by Virgil in his *Pollio*, and by Tacitus in his *Histories*.†

If the majority of the Jews have closed and still close their eyes on the Divine light of the torch which they hold in their hands, this blindness was predicted and must be, in the Divine plan, an invincible demonstration of Christian truth.

“The Jews,” said Pascal, “by killing Jesus Christ, in order not to receive him as Messiah, have given him the last mark of Messiahship. By continuing to despise him, they have rendered themselves irreproachable witnesses; and in killing him, and continuing to deny it, they have accomplished the prophecies.”‡

Who does not see that this indestructible people, whose existence is a miracle visible to all eyes, is divinely condemned to expiate the greatest of crimes, and to render the most irrefragable testimony to a religion which it abhors! When the Christian cause, on the eve of being judged by a final decision, shall have no further need of witnesses, *the remnant of Jacob will open their eyes to the light, and shed*

* See in the *Œuvres de Leibnitz*, his letters to Hunt, particularly the 3d, 4th and 5th.

† Pluribus persuasio inerat, antiquis sacerdotum litteris contineri, eo ipso tempore fore ut valesceret Oriens, profectique Judææ rerum potentiarentur. (Histor. v. cap. 13.)

‡ Pensées, ch. viii.

*tears of repentance and love, at the feet of him whom they have pierced.**

As to this *chance* upon which the skeptic so easily casts everything that does not please him, I would make one observation.

Hitherto men of discretion have seen in chance only nonsense, the divine agent of fools; but by referring to it everything great and extraordinary in the government of the world, it has been transmuted into an infinitely wise and powerful being, who differs from Jehovah only in name. What then, oh skeptics! have you gained? Of what importance is it whether the Supreme Being, who at some future time is to demand of you an account of the reason you have received from him, be called Jehovah or chance?

CHAPTER XLII.

REALITY OF EVANGELICAL FACTS.—CHARACTER AND NUMBER OF WITNESSES.

IF, under pain of extreme folly, we are obliged to admit the authenticity of the prophetic books upon the indisputable testimony of the Jews, how can we doubt the authenticity and veracity of the evangelical books, when they are attested by witnesses quite as disinterested and incorruptible, and far more numerous! What witnesses? I will neither cite the Jews nor pagans, who, in the monuments which remain to us of their furious controversy with the disciples of Christ, have never raised the least doubt concerning the authenticity of the evangelical books.† I am about to speak of Christians.

* Is. x. 21; xi. 11.—Zach. xii. 10.

† We refer the reader to what remains to us of the books of Celsus,

One must be blind not to see that of all men in the world, the first Christians were the most interested to destroy the impostor, who should have presented to them a false history of Jesus Christ.

In fact, the greater number of Christians of the first century, and many in the ages which followed, had been at first Jews or pagans, and were consequently obliged to conquer very great and legitimate prejudices against a new religion, which accused the former of deicide and the latter of ignorance and folly.

All, even those who were born of parents already Christian, were men, and consequently cordially opposed to the terrible restraints which the Gospel puts upon the passions. All were strongly attached to honor, to the esteem of their fellow-men, to their liberty, their life, their property, and their kindred, as all men generally are, and must therefore naturally have abhorred a religion which, according to Tertullian, placed mortification at the head of its teachings; a religion filled with hatred and contempt of the human race, according to Tacitus;* a religion which its apostles regarded as a scandal for the Jews and a folly for Gentiles;† a religion, in short, which no man could profess without daily running the risk of seeing himself stripped of his wealth, dragged to

Porphyry and of Julian the Apostate: it will be seen that the two first constantly assume the authenticity of the Gospels, and that the third, perfectly instructed in Christianity, since he had filled the office of lector in the ranks of the clergy, formally recognized these books as the works of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. It will be seen moreover in his books, as well as in the talmud of the Jews, that these frantic enemies of Christianity, attempted to explain the miracles of Jesus Christ by the power of magic, so impossible did they consider it to deny their existence. This fact alone would close the mouth of our commentators if any facts had power against ignorance and dishonesty.

* *Odio humani generis convicti sunt.* (*Annal.* xv. ch. 44.)

† *Judæis quidem scandalum, gentibus autem stultitiam.* (1. Cor. i. 23.)

prison, laid upon hot irons, stretched upon the rack to be burned, disembowelled, nailed to the cross, and smeared with pitch to light during the night the gardens of Nero, or thrown to the wild beasts of the amphitheatre.*

To suppose that these men, from whatever class of society they might proceed,† could have surmounted obstacles, in their nature insurmountable, to become Christians, without being overwhelmed by the evidence of the divinity of Christianity, is an enormous insult to common sense.

Fanatics have now and then been found, sufficiently infatuated with their religious reveries, to maintain them even on the scaffold; yet these examples have been extremely rare, and have never been contagious; but that a large number of men should have braved hatred and public contempt, and have expired in horrible torture to attest sensible, palpable facts, in which the truth is so easily detected, and whose falseness would have been manifest to them, is what has never been seen, and never will be seen whilst the laws of the moral world subsist.

This however, is the strange and monstrous phenomenon which the infidel is forced to admit. In short, what reason did the Apostles and their first disciples give for their faith in Jesus? The innumerable miracles they had seen him perform, miracles of such publicity that they did not fear to call the Jews themselves to witness them, above all the miracle of his resurrection, of which they could not doubt, because, as they affirm, they conversed, eat and drank with him, during more than forty days after he came forth from the tomb. How did the Christians justify their faith in the testimony of

* Et pereuntibus addita ludibria, ut ferarum tergis connecti laniatuum canum interirent, aut curcibus affixi, aut flammandi, atque ubi defecisset dies, in usum nocturni luminis ure rentur. (Tacit. *lococit.*)

† They were from all classes, even from the court of Nero. *Maximè autem qui de Cæsaris domo sunt.* (Philipp. iv. 22.)

the Apostles? By the miracles also, which the latter and their disciples incessantly worked, by the dead whom they saw raised to life, by the lame whom they saw walking, by the blind, the deaf, and the paralytic, whom they had seen instantly cured by the invocation of the name of Jesus. All spoke only of what they had heard with their ears, seen with their eyes, and touched with their hands.*

I would say to the boldest enemy of miracles: If you met with eleven witnesses as little suspected of fanaticism as the Apostles and the early Christians appear to have been, when we read their writings, and hear them reason with their judges in the midst of tortures; if you saw eleven witnesses of this character enduring the most horrible death to attest the resurrection of a dead man, you would without doubt waver, and at least ask if the fact might not be possible. Instead of eleven witnesses, we may place eleven hundred, or eleven thousand. You must now either acknowledge the miracle, or be convicted of madness. Could you doubt the miracles of Jesus Christ and the Apostles of his religion, miracles established by the testimony of nearly eleven millions of Christians of every age, sex and condition, slain from the time of Nero, in the middle of the first century, to Constantine, in the commencement of the fourth,† and expect to save your reputation as a reasonable being!

But it will be soon seen that we are yet far from the true number of the witnesses of the miracles.

* Quod andivimus, quod vidimus oculis nostris, quod perspeximus, et manus nostræ contrectaverunt. (I. John. i. 4.)

† The *Acta primorum Martyrum sincera* of Dom Ruinart, and the learned Preface which precedes them, prove that this number is not exaggerated.

CHAPTER XLIII.

CONVERSION OF THE WORLD, MANIFEST PROOF OF THE DIVINE INTERPOSITION—ABSURDITY OF NATURAL REASONS WHICH ARE GIVEN FOR THIS EVENT.

A FEW days before his death, Jesus Christ said to his disciples: "And I, if I be lifted up on the cross, will draw all things to myself."*

Two months after this incomprehensible prediction, twelve poor fishermen of the lake of Genesareth, undertook to realize it.

Instead of the Gods whom the world had adored for so many ages, they preached a God made man, born in a stable, reared in a carpenter's shop, put to death on the cross between two malefactors.

For the brilliant and licentious fictions of pagan mythology, for the eloquent discussions of philosophers, they substituted a doctrine full of mystery and a morality revolting to the passions. They said to all: "Renounce the vain light of your reason, and submit your mind to the yoke of faith; sacrifice your most natural inclinations by despising yourselves by despising wealth, honor, and pleasure, by forgiving injuries, and loving your enemies. Sacrifice the body to the severe laws of penitence. Poverty, humility and mortification are the inheritance of the disciples of a crucified God."

What temporal rewards did they promise to those who consented to follow them? Contempt, persecution, loss of possession and of liberty, the dungeon, the stake and every variety of torture.

If such an enterprise had not been decreed in the councils of the Most High, who converts obstacles to means, and is

* St. John xii. 32.

pleased to make all things of nothing, we must acknowledge that all these who engaged in it were extravagant and mad.

Yet the crucified one draws everything to himself. Twenty years after the death of Jesus Christ, St. Paul, whose conversion and apostleship, have furnished a profound English thinker with a beautiful demonstration of the truth of Christianity,* wrote to the Christians of Rome that their faith is spoken of throughout all the world.† The fishermen took in their nets not only the common people, but the learned, philosophers, senators, proconsuls, officers and courtiers. In vain did the emperors, the priests of the idols, and all human powers arm themselves against what they called an infamous and odious superstition. In vain the people cried "Give the Christians to the lions." The Christians multiplied under the axe of the executioner. In short, after three centuries of carnage, the cross was planted upon the capitol, and before the middle of the seventh century, Christianity was the religion of the Roman empire, that is, of the then known world.

No one I think, will dream of denying the fact. Deny the divine interposition, reduce the agents of this immense revolution to the rank of impostors or fanatics, the phenomenon is more absurd than incontestable. It is the mouse which brought forth the Alps.‡

* See the work of Lord George Lyttleton, published in English under the title of, *Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul*, and translated into French by the Abbé Guénée, under the following title: *La Religion Chrétienne démontrée par la Conversion et l'Apostolat de Saint Paul*. Lyttleton was, like the celebrated Gilbert West, his friend, one of those conscientious thinkers whom a profound study of the Christian Religion led from the ranks of skepticism into those of the most illustrious defenders of Christianity.

† Fides vestra annuntiatur in universo mundo. (Rom. i. 8.)

‡ "A man who can believe that these facts, so contrary to all that we know, took place in virtue of the disposition of the human heart, and have occurred without supernatural intervention, such a man has

I am not ignorant of the efforts of certain modern professors of the philosophy of history, to take from this event the evidence of its supernatural character. Christianity according to them would be only a magnificent burst of human thought, which, after having for a long time lingered among the sensual fictions of mythology, progressively rose to spiritualism and renewed in the Christian creed, the fruit of its theologico-philosophical labors in Egypt, Persia, India, and Greece.

But I also know, that these sublime professors have not been able to disfigure history sufficiently to give to their strange paradoxes even the shadow of probability. Let them show us then, history in hand, that constant progression of ideas, and those steps of the human mind towards the height of christian faith. Let them show us in the progressive amelioration of public and private morals among the Pagans, any tendency whatever towards the regeneration effected by the Christian decalogue in the individual, the family and society. In a word, let them represent the world to us as almost christian before the coming of Christ.

Do these persons regard us then as barbarians, as such strangers to all historical knowledge, as not to know that at the moment when Christianity appeared, the mind and heart of man were every where at the antipodes of its doctrine and morality!

Was it the universal prevalence of the philosophy of Epicurus embellished by the poetry of Lucretius, which could have prepared the Romans and the Greeks for the introduction of the Christian dogma!

Was it when the terrible corruption of morals justified by much more faith than is necessary for a belief in the Christian Religion, and he remains incredulous through pure credulity." (Soame Jenyns, *Examination of the Internal Evidence of Christianity*, p. 160, translation of Feller.

religion and by the example and authority of the sages of philosophy, contaminated with unspeakable abominations the temples, the palaces of the emperors, private dwellings and public theatres; was it when *love had but one form which cannot be named*;* was it in the ages of Tiberius, Nero, Caligula, Vitellius and Heliogabulus, ages so well described by Lucian, Tacitus, Juvenal, Suetonius, Atheneus, Dion-Cassius, Lampridius, Ammianus Marcellus, &c., was it then, that evangelical morality could have been welcomed! Was it when the Patricians of Rome fed the fishes of their ponds with the flesh of the slaves, was it when the public found no remedy for ennui, except in the massacre of gladiators,† that Christian charity was to take possession of all hearts!

If then it is the world which has given birth to Christianity, let the cries of fury be explained to us, which welcomed the newly born on his entrance into it.

Finally, how have these professors of the philosophy of history, fallen into so profound an ignorance of history and philosophy.

CHAPTER XLIV.

DISTINGUISHING MIRACLE OF CHRISTIANITY.—NUMBER OF WITNESSES OF THE DIVINITY OF RELIGION.—EXTRAVAGANCE OF THE UNBELIEVER.

It was without doubt a superhuman act, which destroyed the immemorial worship of idols, and cast down from the altar-height to the obscurity of a museum, the venerated images of the gods of Olympus.

* Montesquieu, *Esprit des Lois*, liv. vii. ch. 9.

† Jugulantur homines, ne nihil agatur. (Senec. ep. vii.)

But the miracle of Christian miracles, was the triumph over an idolatry, far more ancient, far more universal, far more profound, the idolatry of *self*.

Fenelon has somewhere said that nothing is easier than to prove to a man of sense that Jupiter is not; but to prove to a man that he himself is nothing and to oblige him to treat himself accordingly!—this however Christianity has done. It requires that, recognizing all our thought to be ignorance, and all our desires corruption, we wholly lay aside ourself; it requires us to renounce our own knowledge by, faith crucify our appetites by penitence, and follow after the humiliated God.*

Here we see, are as many gods to dethrone as there are individuals, as many idols to overthrow as there are passions in the human heart.

We have said above that all men are naturally Christians: which is true; for there is in us a natural fund of love for truth and virtue. But our passions often make us infidels, and there are very few Christians who are not occasionally inclined to wish that religion was false.

Christianity is then professed only by its enemies, and every Christian is a martyr; that is to say, he attests the truth of religion at his own expense. If he brings his conduct into conformity with the gospel, he sacrifices his passions to this faith, and this sacrifice is little less than that of life. If he violates the duties which faith imposes upon him, he enters into warfare with his conscience and loses the first of blessings, peace with himself.

Thus the testimony of one believer alone, proves more in

* Si quis vult post me venire, abneget semetipsum, et tollat crucem suam, et sequatur me. (Matth. xvi. 24.) Exspoliantes vos veterem hominem cum actibus suis; et induentes novum, &c. (Coloss. iii. 9, 10.) Qui autem sunt Christi, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis. (Galat. v. 24.)

favor of Christianity, than the opposition of a hundred infidels proves against it. The reason is clear why there are men who *refuse to believe*; it is because *they wish to be dispensed from doing well*: * to be an unbeliever, it is sufficient to leave ourselves at liberty; but to believe, is a different affair, and the violence which a Christian does to his heart or his conscience, finds its motive only in the irresistible truth of his religion.

All Christians are martyrs to their religion. Let us now enumerate them.

The actual number of Christians is at least two hundred and forty millions. Reducing it to a hundred and eighty millions for each generation, and giving thirty-five years to each, we shall have more than nine hundred millions of Christians.

And it is in presence of this host of witnesses, some bleeding under the iron of the executioners, others radiant with the light of genius, and most of them respected for their virtues; it is, I repeat, in the presence of this throng of witnesses, that the unbeliever, always alone in his opinion,† says to us: "You are all simpletons; why do you not see that your religion is nonsense!"

I would ask if the human heart has pity and contempt enough for such extravagance!

Finally: to take from the Gospel its historical reality, is to abjure reason entirely.

* *Noluit intelligere ut bene ageret.* (Ps. xxxv. 4.)

† Infidels, in fact, never agree except in attacking religion; and in that, even what differences! what one approves in Christianity, the other rejects, what one admires, another despises. "I find them all," says J. J. Rousseau, "proud, arrogant, and even dogmatic in their pretended unbelief, proving nothing, and making sport of each other; and this point common to all, appears to me the only one in which they are all right. If the votes are counted, each one is reduced to his own." Hence the skeptic always says: "I alone know more than nine millions like myself."

CHAPTER XLV.

HARMONY OF CHRISTIANITY WITH THE GENERAL HISTORY
OF THE WORLD, WITH NATURE AND WITH ALL THE
SCIENCES.

OF all books extant, the Bible is the only one which makes known to us the origin of things, the creation of the world, the formation of man, the cradle of society, and the different physical, political and moral revolutions through which the human race has arrived at the epoch in which profane history comes forth from the shades of fable. This portion of our Holy Books is sufficiently justified by its great simplicity, the extreme sobriety of its details, the admirable connection of its facts, and even by the naturalness of the miraculous events which it must necessarily contain.*

The annals of ancient nations, separated from what is evidently fabulous in them, agree with the Mosaic chronology. The intellectual, political and moral condition of society at its appearance in history, proves the youth of the nations, and that of the world is demonstrated by the general aspect of the globe and by the numerous chronometers scattered over its surface.†

* The marvellous is always natural and reasonable when it is necessary, that is, when the nature of facts demands the intervention of a super-human agent. This is the judicious observation of the legislator of the latin Parnassus :

*Nec Deus intersit, nisi dignus vindice nodus
Inciderit . . .*

On the contrary, it is doing violence to reason, to attribute to nature what evidently surpasses her powers : this is the marvellous stupidity which so abounds in these modern theories, (that pretend) to explain naturally, the formation of the world and its inhabitants.

M. Cuvier counts four principal ones, the alluvial accretions, the downs, the peat-grounds and the rolling downs. "Nature," said this

We cannot now speak of the astronomical monuments of Egypt, known under the name of zodiacs, without smiling at the calculations of Dupuis, and the triumph of his foolish admirers,* “since finishing where one would naturally have commenced, if prejudice had not blinded the first observers, pains have been taken to copy and restore the Greek inscriptions engraved on monuments, and especially since M. Champollion has succeeded in decyphering those which are expressed in hieroglyphics.”†

The terrible event which Moses relates in the seventh chapter of Genesis, an event so obstinately denied by the naturalists of the Encyclopædia, is now beyond the reach of all opposition. The *denudated valleys, the boulders, the caves of fossil remains*, and that *mammoth, which has left*, in the diluvial beds, *thousands of its skeletons from Spain to the shores of Siberia*,‡ that mammoth whose still bleeding flesh nourishes the dogs of the Tunguse fishermen,§ such is the incon-

“learned man,” everywhere holds the same language; she everywhere proclaims that the actual order of things does not go back to a great antiquity; and what is very remarkable, man every where tells us the same thing as nature, whether we consult the true traditions of nations, or examine the moral and political state, and the intellectual development which they had attained at the commencement of their authentic monuments.” *Discours sur les Révolutions de la Surface du Globe*, &c. p. 164. “None of the ancient monuments of profane history still subsisting, and dating from a certain historical epoch, contradicts the period assigned to the deluge, according to the Greek text of the Septuagint.” Champollion, *Résumé complet de Chronologie*, &c. No. 60.

* Dupuis, in the *Mémoire sur l’Origine des Constellations*, inserted in the 3d vol. of his very absurd *Origine des Cultes*, traces back the astronomical studies of the Egyptians, to the modest epoch of fifteen thousand years.

† Cuvier, *Discours*, &c. p. 269

‡ Cuvier, *Discours*, &c. p. 334.

§ Every one has heard of the famous elephant discovered in 1799, at the mouth of the Lena by a Tunguse chief, and the skeleton of which is still seen in the Imperial Museum of St. Petersburg.

trovertible testimony given by geology, and which, diffused over all points of the globe, attests the universality of the catastrophe. On the other hand the date which the sacred writer assigns to it, is confirmed by the progress of *deltas*, *deposits*, *accumulation of sand around the glaciers*, *peet-grounds*, &c. "If there is anything established in geology," says the first naturalist of the age, "it is that the surface of our globe has been the subject of a great and sudden revolution, the date of which cannot extend much farther back than five or six thousand years."*

One fact, however, which this great man regarded as established, I mean the absence of human fossil remains,† gave a handle to the enemies of the Bible. Obligated to recognize the existence of the deluge, they hastened to publish that it was anterior to the human race. But their learned dissertations were still moist from the press, when from many parts of France and Belgium, the discovery of human fossil remains was announced, and M. Cuvier himself made the communication of this very important fact to the Academy of Science.‡ It is true that there yet remains some doubt among

* Cuvier, *Discours*, &c. p. 282.

† Cuvier, *Ibid.* p. 131.—"But I would not conclude, said this learned man, that our race did not exist at all before this epoch. It might have inhabited some countries of small extent, from whence it re-peopled the earth after these terrible events; perhaps also the places where man was preserved, have been entirely swallowed up, and his bones buried in the depths of the present seas, &c." p. 138.

‡ Session of January 11th, 1830.—Already in the session of the 23d of November preceding, the simultaneous discoveries of M. M. Chrysteller and Marcel de Serves, in the department of Gard, and in the neighborhood of Montpellier of human bones, presenting all the characteristics of fossils had been announced. M. Tournal also discovered in the grotto of Bize, near Narbonne, human bones, mingled with the remains of pottery and the bones of animals now lost, and the materials under which they are buried are regarded by all geologists as belonging to the deluge. See *Bulletin de la Société Géologique de France*,

geologists of the diluvian character of these bones; but all agree that the investigation of the diluvian depositories, has not yet been made on a scale sufficiently extensive to enable the inference to be drawn from it, of the non-existence of human fossils.

CHAPTER XLVI.

CONTINUATION.—WORK OF SIX DAYS.—UNITY OF THE HUMAN RACE.—UNIVERSAL TRADITIONS.

THE Mosaic cosmogony appeared to the philosophers of the eighteenth century as an imaginary tale, unworthy of the attention of the learned. Among other circumstances, the creation of light before the sun was very amusing to the naturalists of that period.

At the present day there is no one “who does not smile with pity at the scientific reasonings of Voltaire,” and of his school, “against the book of Genesis.”*

The theory of *undulations*, which recognizes in the luminous fluid, an existence independent of the sun—a theory which must naturally enter the thoughts of philosophers

1830. M. Schomerling has found in the caverns of Maëstrich, heads which recel, according to him, African forms. These skulls are mixed with the remains of pottery, bone bodkins, &c. See Jehan, *Nouveau Traité des Sciences Géologiques, étude*, x.

* Words of M. the Baron of Firussac, *Bulletin Universel des Sciences*, vol. x.—“The authors of the XVIIIth Century who have treated the sacred books of the Hebrews with contempt mingled with anger, judged antiquity in a wretchedly superficial manner. . . In order to amuse themselves with Voltaire at the expense of Ezekiel or of Genesis, two things were necessary, which make this gaiety very sad: the most profound ignorance and the most deplorable frivolity.” Benjamin Constant, *De la Religion considérée, &c.* vol. iv. ch. 11.

every time they write by the light of a wax-candle or see the flint sparkling under the stroke of the steel, acquires by experience the value of a demonstrated fact.

As to the recital of the work of six days, all men of science agree that there is nothing in it incompatible with modern discoveries.

Some persons, believing that they find a perfect correspondence between the geological constitution of the globe, and the order of terrestrial productions stated by Moses in the first chapter of Genesis, contemplate with religious respect this astonishing page, and ask who has revealed to its author truths so profoundly concealed from his cotemporaries.*

Others disputing, not without some reason, this coincidence, see nothing in the recital of Genesis but the history of the formation of the Adamic world, and date the existence of anterior worlds, whose antediluvian beds conceal immense ruins, from the vast period of time which intervened between the act of creation and the actual organization of the globe.†

The unity of the human race which, according to Voltaire, could only be admitted by blind persons,‡ is no longer called in question, except by some blind admirers of that man whose ignorance equalled his impiety. Strong in the testimony of

* See M. Demerson. *La Géologie enseignée en vingt deux leçons*, Paris, 1829, p. 408, 471.—M. Boubée, *Géologie populaire*, Paris, 1833, p. 66.

† This hypothesis, which seems now to prevail concerning the theory of the day-periods of the learned De Luc, would have the double advantage of doing no violence to the words of scripture, and of agreeing with a certain number of geological facts. It would find also a respectable support in the monuments of antiquity, whether Christian or profane. See Wiseman, *Discourse on the relation between science and revealed Religion*, discourse 5th.—Desdouts, *Soirées de Monthléry*.—Jehan, *Nouveau Traité des sciences géologiques*, etude xii.

‡ *Histoire de Russie, sous Pierre le Grand*, ch. i.

the greatest modern naturalists,* it finds a new demonstration in ethnography.

What Moses tells us in the eleventh chapter of Genesis, that before the separation of the children of Noah, *the earth had one tongue and the same speech*, and that this unity of language was suddenly destroyed by an act of Divine power,† is confirmed by the comparative study of languages. Closely examined, all known tongues are grouped around three primitive languages; and the latter, in their turn show, by their numerous connections, both a common origin and a separation, which could not be the slow and gradual work of ages.‡ If we afterwards retrace the line which different idioms and different nations have followed in their diverging movement, we shall arrive precisely at that part of the ancient world where the sacred writer places the common stock of human families.§ A comparison of the different writings and cyphers in use among ancient and modern nations leads to the same result.||

But while consulting the historical and literary monuments of nations, if we look into their creeds, we shall find that their religious traditions always unite in one primitive tradition, of which they are only a more or less gross corruption. The unity of God, the creation of heaven and earth, the existence of good and bad spirits, the felicity enjoyed by our first parents, the crime by which they fell, their longevity, the expectation of a deliverer, faith in future rewards and punish-

* Buffon, Cuvier, Lacépède, Blumenbach, &c.

† *Erat autem terra labii unius, et sermonum eorumdem. Venite igitur descendamus, et confundamus linguam eorum.* (Gen. xi. 1, 7.)

‡ See Wiseman, *Discourse*, &c. 2d discourse.

§ See Adrien Balbi, *Atlas Ethnographique du Globe, au Classification des Peuples anciens et modernes*, depuis leurs langues, &c.

|| *Essais sur l'Origine unique et hieroglyphique des chiffres et des lettres de tous les peuples*, &c., by M. de Paravey, Paris, 1826.

ments, prayer, sacrifice, the remembrance of a universal deluge, &c., are found, more or less encumbered with fabulous details, in the creeds of all nations. The human race, like nature, has but one voice, and that voice is Christian.

We have now seen that Christianity is essentially true, and pure from all error. Is it also good, and capable of procuring for man the degree of happiness compatible with his state of trial?

CHAPTER XLVII.

EXCELLENCE OF THE EVANGELICAL MORALITY.—ITS ADMIRABLE INFLUENCE ON SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

THAT the Christian Decalogue has not a single commandment which does not tend to render man good and perfect, is a fact which needs no proof, acknowledged as it is by the enemies of our faith. A volume might be composed of the praises which Voltaire, Rousseau, d'Alembert, Diderot, and their followers have rendered to the perfection of the Gospel morality.

But is not man made happy when he is made virtuous? Take from the human heart the bad passions which the Gospel condemns, establish in it that tender charity of which Jesus has given us the precept and the example, a charity which obliges every one to labor for the happiness of others, with as much interest as for his own, the earth would become a paradise, and the innumerable woes which now make it desolate would be banished.

What, in truth, are the greater part of our miseries, but the effect of our vices. With ambition, avarice, libertinism, would

disappear war, fraud, lawsuits, pauperism, hatred, vengeance, homicide, and three-fourths of the maladies; in short, all the scourges of human origin. As to natural afflictions, which the universal conscience, religion and reason, lead us to view as Divine chastisements, it is plain that they would be in a great measure done away, with the crimes which provoked them.

Charity would neutralize the effect of those which God still allowed to remain, to try the submission of his children, and give them an opportunity to aid each other. Would not the love of God and our neighbor accomplish more than a wise love of gain could effect by the institution of *Insurance Companies*? By dividing their woes and afflictions among a large number, we should take from misfortune its power.

Death would remain with the physical infirmities attached to our state of expiation and trial; but, for the disciple of Jesus Christ, is not death gain, and does not the cross transmute sufferings into the coin with which the crowns and joys of heaven are purchased?*

It may be said that this is Utopian: but if the absolute reign of the Gospel over all hearts has never been seen, and probably never will be seen, who is to be blamed for it? the Gospel or man? Must Christianity, then, be made responsible for our perversity?

We shall show elsewhere that Utopia is more or less realized among Christian nations, and that their general well-being has always been proportioned to the degree of influence which their customs and laws have permitted to the Gospel.†

Moreover, as everything in us excites us to consecrate our existence to the glory of God and the welfare of our fellow-

* Mihi enim . . . mori lucrum, (Philipp. i. 21.)—Momentaneum et leve tribulationis nostræ supra modum in sublimitate æternæ gloriæ pondus operatur in nobis. (II. Cor. iv. 17.)

† See Second Problem.

men, Christianity does not make our own happiness depend upon our success; very different in that from philosophy which shows us felicity only in that unattainable future where all men shall agree to act in obedience to its laws.

The true Christian, if he were alone in the world, if all the world were against him, would yet be happy, and would say with the Apostle of the Gentiles: "I am filled with comfort, I exceedingly abound with joy in all our tribulation."* He finds in the testimony of a good conscience *a continual feast*,† an inexhaustible source of delight, in which the fire of tribulation is extinguished as a spark in the sea.

Almost all our moral sufferings arise from the continual opposition which our capricious and often unjust wills meet with; we desire what we have not and cannot have.‡

The Christian avoids these contradictions by suffering in himself no other will but that of God, which nothing resists.§ Convinced that this father, whose infinite benevolence everything guarantees to him, will make the most painful events serve for the benefit of his children,|| he abandons himself with joy to his loving providence, and always finds things working together for the best. Let him vegetate in obscurity and indigence, let him sit on a dunghill devoured by worms like Job; let him be thrown, loaded with irons, into the depths of a dungeon; or be condemned to bear a still heavier burden of calumny and public hatred, this thought:

* Repletus sum consolatione, superabundo gaudio in omni tribulatione nostrâ. (II. Cor. vii. 4.)

† Secura mens quasi jube convivium. (Prov. xv. 15.)

‡ Unde bella et lites in vobis? Nonne hinc? ex concupiscentiis vestris, quæ militant in membris vestris? Concupiscitis, et non habetis . . . Zelatis, et non potestis adipisci. (Jas. iv. 2.)

§ Voluntati enim ejus quis resistit? (Rom. ix. 19.)

|| Scimus autem quoniam diligentibus Deum omnia co-operatur in bonum. (Rom. viii. 28.)

God sees it, God wills it, God will reward it; he must indeed love me, since he treats me as his well-beloved Son, will charm away his pain, and he will exclaim with the Apostle of the Indies: "Still more, Lord, still more!"

Hence that calmness, that serenity, that joy of the martyrs in the midst of tortures, which the astonished persecutors could only explain by magic, and which often led the executioners to throw aside the axe and hasten to baptism. Hence, in all the saints, that taste, that passion for suffering, which caused them to say: "Let me die or suffer."

What an unspeakable charm does the Christian, who nourishes himself with thoughts of faith, find in the prospect of that eternity of glory and of joy from which he is separated only by the short passage of life! The uncertainty concerning the moment of death, which poisons the life of the worldling, supports him and consoles him, and it is with joy that he sees falling, piece by piece, the prison of clay which retains his soul in the land of exile. Does the ambitious hero who discerns, through the smoke of the battle-field, the walls of the capitol where to-morrow his head is to be encircled with the diadem, in the midst of a people intoxicated with joy, complain of his fatigues, does he even feel the blood flowing from his wounds? Does the lover, who is going to receive before the altar the vows of her whom he passionately adores, perceive the inconveniences of the road or the inclemency of the air? How, then, can the soldier of Christ complain of the difficulties of the way, he who is always on the eve of being crowned king of heaven and of the universe! he whom the chaste embrace of infinite beauty may at any moment plunge into an eternal ecstasy!

Let us say, then, with Montesquieu: "Wonderful, that the Religion which seems to have no other object than the felicity of the other life, should yet constitute our happiness in this!"

CHAPTER XLVIII.

BEAUTY OF CHRISTIANITY.—IDEA OF THE BEAUTIFUL.
ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ANCIENT AND
CHRISTIAN ART.—PAGAN ARCHITECTURE.

THE beautiful, that divine reflection of the true, that flower of which goodness is the fruit, that charm so powerful over the heart of man, is it found in Christianity?

A volume would be required to answer this question; this volume exists, and I would not be the one to enter into competition with the author of the *Genie du Christianisme*. I will limit myself to one idea concerning the nature of the beautiful and the distance which separates Christian from Pagan art.

As man is so constituted that he can find his happiness only in the presence and enjoyment of supreme perfection, it follows that the infinite is alone capable of permanently commanding his love, and that an object can only please him, in proportion as it is really or apparently related to the archetype of all beauty. This exclusive predilection for the infinite Being is revealed in a thousand ways. It is this which changes the most lively passion into indifference as soon as the object is too well known. It is this which causes veiled beauty to be preferred to beauty made manifest.* It is this

* “Who does not know that beauty divined is more attractive than beauty visible? What man has not frequently remarked, that the woman who is determined to satisfy the eye more than the imagination, is wanting in taste as well as wisdom. Vice even rewards modesty, by exaggerating the charms which she veils.” De Maistre, *Examen de la Philosophie de Bacon*, vol. 2d, ch. 7.—“The imagination which embellishes what it desires, abandons it in possession. Except the self-existing Being, there is nothing beautiful but that which is not. The existence of finite beings is so meager and limited, that when we

which leads us, in the arrangement of our buildings and gardens, to adopt the distribution which best conceals their narrowness. "The most delightful park," Addison has somewhere said, "wearies us as soon as we perceive the walls which limit its inclosure, we can only breathe freely in infinite space!"

Such being the disposition of the human heart, the highest aim of art is to avoid too definite and limited forms, and to diffuse over the finite a tinge of the infinite, without falling into the vagueness which offends our love of the real.

Christian genius has realized this in the fine arts, above all in architecture and music, which have especially lent themselves to it. Hence its superiority in the first of these departments, and also in the last, as far as we can judge of it.

The Religious idea, among pagans, being the invention of man, the artist could not go beyond the human sphere; for the imagination is only kindled at the fire of intelligence, and the form cannot transcend the idea. Thus their most celebrated religious works have a great defect, that of having nothing divine in them. Their temples are palaces or theatres; and their gods, heroes.

Go to the Belvedere and contemplate the most divine statue which ancient sculpture has bequeathed to us. At the sight of this solitary prodigy, *you will perhaps forget the universe*, for the universe has nothing so beautiful; *you will be transported to Delos, to the sacred woods of Lycia*,^{*} everywhere, except only see what is, we are never moved. Chimeras adorn real objects, and if the imagination does not add a charm to what strikes us, the sterile pleasure that we take in it, is limited to the organ, and always leaves the heart cold." Rousseau, *Pensées*,—Imagination.

* "At the aspect of this prodigy of art, I forgot the whole universe. . . . From admiration I passed into ecstasy; I felt my breast expand and heave; I was transported to Delos and the sacred woods of Lycia, those places which Apollo had honored with his presence." (Winkelmann, *Histoire de l'Art*, livre 6^e, ch. 6.)

to heaven. The thought of the serpent Python will drive from your recollection the *archer with the inevitable arrow*, that you may think only of the incomparable artist, and exclaim: "Sublime genius, why have you not known the true Son of the true Father of gods and men, who descended upon the earth to overthrow the *great dragon who was drawing the whole universe into the infernal abysses!*"*—Let us return to architecture.

Durability and the desire to astonish, is all that the structures of Egypt, as gigantic and as heavy as their gods, express.

Graceful, smiling, voluptuous as their mythology, the architecture of the Greeks has aimed at nothing but to please the eye. Their temples, of an admirable regularity of outline, of exquisite delicacy of detail, are, like the gods who inhabit them, nothing but the creation of human thought. A glance of the eye is sufficient to comprehend them, they only speak to the senses; they recall nothing but the artist. The graceful deities whom sculpture has introduced into them did not descend from the empyrean, or if they originated there, they have so far forgotten their origin, and are so well acclimated among men, that we should vainly seek in them an aspiration towards heaven.

Properly speaking, the Greeks have had but one religious monument, that is, one which excites the thought of God, it is the altar erected to the *unknown God*.†

The fantastic wandering Arab, a passionate lover of the marvellous, has impressed himself completely on his aerial structures. The mosques and palaces with which he has covered the south of Spain, are only a version of the *Thousand and one Nights*.

Finally, Egyptian architecture aspires to immortality, but

* Et projectus est draco ille magnus . . . qui seducit universum orbem. (Apoc. xii. 9.)

† Ignoto Deo. (Act. xvii. 23.)

to earthly immortality. The architecture of Greece only aims to embellish our terrestrial dwelling place. The Arabian soothes the imagination, it loves to surprise, and allures to reverie. Christian architecture alone recalls to man his destiny and makes him aspire to heaven.

But what is this Christian Architecture?

CHAPTER XLIX.

CHRISTIAN ARCHITECTURE.—ITS CHARACTER.

THE first Christian Churches in the West, says the author of *Etudes Historiques*, were only remodelled temples: the pagan worship was external, the decoration of the temple was superficial; the Christian worship was interior. The columns were transferred from the exterior to the interior of the edifice.*

For several centuries these alterations were sufficient. Edifices could not be erected on a soil constantly trembling under foot of the barbarians. To the tumult of wars let us add the terrible tradition which announced, in the tenth century, the end of the world, and there will be less reason for astonishment at the slow progress of Christian architecture.

When once the world was settled, and believed in its own continuance, that architecture appeared, the wonderful blending of all architecture, original, fruitful, inexhaustible, mysterious, infinite as the religion which inspired it, and which sought to manifest herself in it.

Timid and embarrassed as a novice, in the dome of Pisa, (eleventh century,) she appeared to reach her climax in the

* Etude vi. 2d part, tom. 3.

Cathedral of Cologne and the Spire of Strasbourg (thirteenth century). I say she appeared; for, in truth, no human eye could determine her climax. Greek architecture choosing man for its type, could not rise above man.* Christian art, had God for its object, and by this extraordinary boldness was forced always to ascend. If a foolish admiration of pagan monuments had not checked this impulse, if, instead of imitating the achievements of Greece, the Christian intention had been carried out, we should have perhaps religious edifices which would be to the Cathedral of Cologne, what the funeral orations of Bossuet are to the legends of the thirteenth century.

The historians of art, during the two last centuries, agree in asserting that architecture disappeared with the empire of the West, to appear only with the sixteenth century. The gothic, according to them, is less an art than the absence of all art: having no regularity, no proportion, no symmetry. Profound writers! what would you think of him who should find no trace of good sense in a book, because every word or every line did not commence with the same letter? Gothic structures are a writing, a book: learn to read before blaming the author.

For example, it is asked why in our most beautiful gothic churches the longitudinal line is broken at its upper extremity, and why the choir and sometimes the aisles are oblique to the nave. As if those who raised these prodigious pyramids

* It is from the noble proportions of human nature that those of architecture were taken. Man furnished the proportions of the Doric order: as being more majestic it was consecrated to gods and heroes. Woman, more slight and delicate, gave those of the Ionic order: the latter has been more frequently employed in the temples of the goddesses. The Corinthian, invented by Callimachus, like a young girl, fresh, pure and beautiful, is only composed of the others, but more delicate and ornate." (*Lettres d'Italie*, tom. v. 1780.)

which have not lost their perpendicular for six centuries, were not acquainted with the straight line.

The architect has seen and intended this pretended irregularity. Instead of a cross traced as a square, he represents to us a Man-God expiring on the wood to which his love and our crimes affixed him. The aisles are the arms open to receive the world and bear it up to God; the choir is the head inclined towards the right; the purple-stained panes are dropping yet with his blood; and those statues, mute with grief and astonishment, or cast into the depth of their niches in the attitude of profound meditation, plainly announce to us, that a great mystery is being accomplished there, where we are only looking for stones artistically arranged.

Until a Champollion comes to reveal to us the mysterious sense concealed under these hieroglyphics, let us content ourselves with the prevailing thought. What do these colonnades upon colonnades signify, these galleries upon galleries? They would scale heaven. What is the signification of that multitude of statues of men and animals, rising above each other in the midst of a forest of foliage and productions of every kind? It is humanity, it is all nature, pressing with immense force towards its author.

What is the ogive which the gothic has preferred to the circular arch, an unbending line, which turns its back to heaven and stretches its two extremities towards the earth? It consists of two lines, which indefinitely approaching the vertical only bend to meet, to support, and uplift each other to the greatest possible height.

But, it will be said, what harmony in that multitude of trifling ornaments, no one of which is in keeping with another? The harmony of creation, a harmony as vast as the invisible world of which it is the material symbol: it presents only irregularity and disorder to the human eye incapable of seizing its magnificent outline. Our most vast Gothic structures

are only, if I may so express myself, the first story of the edifice sketched by christian genius, the rest is lost in the depth of heaven.

Vast breadth of outline and variety and perfection of detail are the two distinctive traits of the Gothic, and such are also the characteristics of the great work of creation.

It may perhaps be said that in speaking thus, we censure the application of the Greek style to christian edifices, a style adopted in Italy and which has produced so many master pieces. This is not our idea.

Italy filled with the most beautiful monuments of ancient art; Rome especially, enriched by its emperors with all that was greatest in the conception and execution of Greek and Roman genius, could not abandon that style, without repudiating her inestimable inheritance of models and materials.

Moreover it was part of the plan of Providence that the monuments of Paganism should serve as trophies for its conqueror. It must needs be that the Egyptian obelisk of Caligula should adorn the square of the church of St. Peter, that the columns of the tomb of Adrian should go to ornament the grand nave of the Basilica of St. Paul, at the same time, that the columns erected to Marcus Aurelius and Trajan, should serve as pedestals to the statues of the two apostles.

But while adopting Pagan architecture, the Italian genius has christianized it by giving it that wonderful grandeur, and that character of infinity, which was unknown to the ancients. The Pantheon was too low, it was raised several hundred feet higher; the great circular eye which terminated it so coldly, was replaced by a magnificent dome, and the cross ascending from it into the air to the height of four hundred feet, announces to the world, that it has surpassed the Pantheon by twice its height.

Yes, christian genius, original even when it imitates, expands, and sanctifies whatever it touches; its doctrine uniting the

truths which were scattered up and down through human creeds, presented them as a whole unknown to the human mind, in the same manner as its architecture embracing all the great achievements of antiquity, constructs from them a whole which overwhelms with admiration its most fanatical detractors.*

CHAPTER L.

CHRISTIAN MUSIC.—LITURGIC LITERATURE.

MANY of our readers will be tempted to smile when they hear us speak of the beauties of the plain chant of our churches. Let us quote, then, a man above suspicion, since, from his own confessions, *he is at present very far from the Christian faith.*

“It is especially in the *plain chant*,” says M. Adolphe Gué-
raut, “that we must look for the pure musical inspiration of Christianity, an inspiration simple and sublime, which only delights in the bare arches of the old cathedrals, which blends and harmonizes with the grave and slow movement of the priests,

* The most violent enemy of christian Rome, Dupaty, acknowledges, in this point the superiority of christian genius. “Here is the Pantheon,” said he, “which astonished the Roman imagination and did not astonish that of Michael Angelo! That Pantheon, which was the thought of the age of Augustus and was afterwards only one of the thoughts of Michael Angelo, the dome of his Church of St. Peter. ‘You wonder at the magnitude of the Pantheon,’ said he to the nations, ‘You are astonished that the earth can support it: I will place it in the air.’ The genius of Michael Angelo said this, and his hand executed it.” *Lettres sur Italie*, lettre 87. But to say and do these things, as to paint the *Universal Judgment*, it was necessary that Michael Angelo should be a Christian.

the holy obscurity of the place, the colored glass, the sculptured saints, and even the stone which is alone capable of answering to the full and resounding tones of the organ—the organ, a truly religious instrument, whose manly voice and majestic charm is far from being replaced by the flexibility and brilliant vivacity of our orchestras.”*

The same writer answers, in a manner as novel as solid, to the reproach often cast upon the ecclesiastical chant, of having, by adapting itself to prose, deprived the music of that rhythmical and measured movement, which constitutes its charm and to which the ancients attached so much importance. According to him, rhythm, giving to music a movement, a form, a sensible and definite attraction, characterizes essentially the music of action: it is through this that it has the power to strike, to seize, to move. But for the very reason that it is dramatic, it tends to settle, limit, and repress activity of thought, it subjects the soul to the senses by exciting the latter too much, and thus counteracts the aim of religion, which addresses itself to the senses only, that it may, through them, attract the soul.—Let this intelligent author speak for himself.

“It is remarkable that, in the ancient chants of the church, rhythm is almost entirely wanting, or at least it is so vague, indistinct and confused, that the ear can scarcely recognize it. Hence it is, doubtless, that these melodies predispose so powerfully to meditation, prayer and ecstacy, nearly all are written in the minor key and in an undecided and undulating intonation, they bring to the soul only plaintive and sad inflections, following each other in a capricious succession like sighs, sobs, or emotions of the heart; they have something intense without either form or outline, and which far from abandoning the senses to the reiterated attacks of rhythm, which constantly agitate them, pass over the organs, if I may thus express

* *De la Musique sacrée et de la Musique profane*, by M. Adolphe Guérault. (*Revue Encyclopédique*, 1832.)

myself, without touching them, absorb them and blunt them, for the advantage of the soul, which disengaged from their power, forgetful of time and place, plunges into endless contemplation. They have something fluent, ethereal, dreamy and transparent as the smoke of incense which ascends towards heaven while diffusing itself around.”*

Let us leave, then, to the music of our theatres, its dramatic beauties, its beautiful orchestral effect. As it only sings of man with his passions and his caprices, it has need of mechanical resources to fascinate the public mind and veil the nudity of its hero. Religion sings of God: the boundless richness of the subject forbids the vain affectations of art. To detach the mind and heart from the earth, to transport them to the footstool of the Eternal, and to make us forget ourselves in presence of the Supreme Majesty, which is alone worthy of commanding our thoughts and feelings, is the aim of religious music. Catholic and universal as the Christian doctrines, it belongs to the ignorant as well as the cultivated, to the savage of the desert as well as to the inhabitant of the city. It must then free itself from the elaborate combinations and capricious variations of art, to attach itself to excellences universally and constantly felt.

What we say of the music applies also to the words. Certainly we should not go to our missals, nor to the hymns of our anthem-books to study the richness and elegance of diction belonging to Virgil and Horace; but under a prosaic and negligent form, what glow of inspiration! what burning waves of poetry! what depth of thought! what lively imagery! and more than all what pathos! †

* *De la Musique Sacrée, &c.*

† Those who consider this eulogium on the literary wealth of our ancient liturgies as exaggerated, should read, beside the remarks of M. Adolphe Guérault, cited above, the book entitled: *De la Littérature des Offices divins.* (Paris, 1829.)

The expression is, like that of our holy books, so appropriate to the subject, that notwithstanding its inelegance, it could only be replaced by itself. If there is anything to be reformed in the style of our old liturgies, it is the reformation which talent purely human has seen fit to introduce into them.

Finally, in poetry, as in music and architecture, Christianity has neglected the elegances of detail, and forms too definite, too earthly, which are only adapted to charm the senses and distract the mind. Aspiring uninterruptedly towards heaven, from whence it descended, burning with the desire to uplift entire humanity to the same elevation, it has drawn from the sentiment of its mission, from the nature of the human heart, whose depths it has so well measured, and from the grandeur of God whom it proclaims, those divine traits, those immortal beauties, which, soaring above time and place, belong to all ages and all countries, and like true sublimity, make themselves felt by the lowest intellect, while they enrapture the most exalted souls.

CHAPTER LI.

RECAPITULATION.—WHAT IS WANTING TO CHRISTIANITY IN ORDER TO BE BELIEVED.—OBJECTIONS OF UNBELIEVERS.

CHRISTIANITY then satisfies all the legitimate demands of the human heart.

Its doctrine, so luminous as to lead us to the abodes of eternal light, which it points out to us beyond the darkness of the tomb, subdues every intellect which will examine it in the silence of the passions; and for the eighteen centuries that it has challenged human investigation, it has as yet only suffered the opposition of ignorance and infidelity.

Its morality, which is only opposed to our vices, leads us to happiness by the path of virtue. The blessings which it has diffused throughout the world, and the pure joys which it bestows on hearts obedient to its voice, are sufficient to render credible the sovereign felicity which it promises us in a better world.

It increases the value of our earthly abode, by leading us to regard it as the entrance to eternity, and the divine beauty of its worship, reflecting here below the harmonies of the celestial city, effectually dispels the fatigues of the pilgrimage.

Why then does it fail to captivate all hearts? "It needs only to be known," said the most eloquent of its defenders, sixteen centuries ago.

The challenge which Tertullian gave to the Roman emperors, to produce an idolater who had studied Christianity thoroughly without becoming a Christian,* we can still offer to the unbelievers of our day. Show us one man converted from faith to unbelief by a conscientious study of religion! On the other hand, to pass from the idolater of Tertullian to the philosopher La Harpe, we could show thousands of unbelievers whom study has conquered to the faith, and who will say with the latter: "Examine as I have done, and like me you will believe."

To the objections with which the skepticism of Voltaire has filled thousands of volumes, that are now read only among the lowest persons, Voltaire himself furnishes the only answer they deserve. "Take from these numerous volumes," said he, "an enormous mass of abominations, what would remain? and take moreover from what remains the objections of ignorance and infidelity, there will remain nothing." †

Among those objections however, some are too current to allow even the brevity of this work to pass them over in silence. Some attack the doctrine of Christianity, others its morality.

* *Apologet*, I.

† *Œuv.* tom. xxxii. p. 47.

1st. The doctrine is accused, in the first place, of doing violence to reason, by subjecting it to the belief of incomprehensible mysteries, of checking the progress of knowledge, by preventing thought from overstepping the inflexible limit within which faith imprisons it; 2dly, of disfiguring the Divine character, by making of the Creator a partial and cruel being who, after having given a religion to one small nation concealed in the mountains of Palestine, condemns without pity all other nations, and who, for eighteen hundred years, has condemned to eternal fire millions of idolaters guilty of being ignorant of the doctrine of Christ; 3dly, of fomenting fanaticism and intolerance, by representing those who have the misfortune not to believe, as so many enemies of God, slaves of Satan, and firebrands of hell. And in this connection a long enumeration is made of wars, massacres, and crimes, for which religion has served as a pretext.

2d. Christian morality is reproached: 1st, with favoring despotism, by condemning all rebellion, and not permitting the worst princes to be viewed in any other light than the inviolable ministers of Divine justice; 2dly, of depriving society of all life and progress, by the profound contempt required of a Christian for everything which belongs to the affairs of this lower world, in which he is permitted to see only a prison, and a place of exile.

CHAPTER LII.

IS FAITH IN MYSTERIES AN OUTRAGE UPON REASON?

I WOULD ask of those who complain of the incomprehensibleness of certain Christian truths, if there is any truth in the natural order which they entirely comprehend.

Would human intelligence, which sees the whole of nothing, which is unable to comprehend itself, pretend to comprehend God! Everything in us and about us offers to it only impenetrable mysteries; it is bewildered by a drop of water, or a grain of sand; and should there be nothing in heaven concealed from it!*

Let a mathematician of the first rank undertake to reveal to us the deepest secrets of the science of the Newtons and Keplers, we should not be at all surprised to see mysteries fall fast from his lips. However startling some of his assertions might appear, we still should compassionate the presumptuousness of one who, having scarcely read the arithmetic of Bezout, should dare to dispute with the sublime lecturer the truth of his theorems. But when the Supreme Intelligence, before which all the Newtons are as moles, deigas to reveal to us some of the secrets of his Divine being, we yield nothing to the authority of the master; and if his words jar upon our ignorance, even in the slightest degree, they will meet only the smile of incredulity! Could the extravagance of pride go farther than this! Do we pretend to know as much as God!

No, the skeptic will answer: but when God speaks to man, it is the duty of his wisdom to place itself within our reach; to propose only useful truths, adapted to enlighten and improve us; to speak to us a supernatural language, and tell us unintelligible things, is an ostentation of science unworthy of an infinitely wise Being. If God in his revelations, had proposed to himself only to crush our great enemy, pride, and oblige us to recognize humbly our ignorance in the presence of his infinite wisdom, would it not be a useful object? Is not faith, the worship of intelligence, the immolation we make

* Difficile æstimamus quæ in terrâ sunt: et quæ in prospectu sunt, invenimus cum labore. Quæ autem in coelis sunt, quis investigabit? (Sap. ix. 16.)

of our feeble light to the light of eternal reason?^{*} Now what merit would there be in submitting to the Divine word, if it offered to the mind the irresistible force of evidence?[†]

But Christian revelation has not this character of unintelligibility attributed to it by the unbeliever. What are a few mysteries in the midst of this abundance of historical, moral, and philosophical knowledge, which the holy scripture contains, that inexhaustible source of light, from which philosophers themselves have borrowed everything except their errors!

Are these mysteries at all more unintelligible than many others in the natural order, which no one thinks of calling in question?[‡]

Nay, more, it is to the knowledge of these mysteries that we are indebted for the immense light which Christianity, even according to its enemies, has shed over the past, present, and future condition of man. "Certainly nothing more rudely jars us than original sin," said Pascal; "and yet without this mystery, the most incomprehensible of all, we are incomprehensible to ourselves. The labyrinthine thread of our condition turns and winds among the folds of this mystery; hence man is more incomprehensible without this mystery, than this mystery is incomprehensible to man."[§]

Take from Christianity the fundamental fact of the trinity of divine persons in the unity of nature, and of the hypostatic union of one of these persons with the human nature, the Gospel becomes an insolvable enigma.

^{*} Rousseau, in other respects so great an enemy to mysteries, confessed the necessity and the merit of this sacrifice, when he exclaimed: "Being of beings, . . . the most worthy use of my reason is to annihilate myself before thee: it is the delight of my weakness to find myself overwhelmed with thy grandeur." (Emile, tome iii. p. 189.)

[†] *Hæc est laus fidei, si quid creditur non videtur: nam quid magnum est, si id creditur quod videtur.* (S. Augustin, Traet. 78, in John.)

[‡] As above, ch. 38.

[§] *Pensées*, tit. 3d. 8.

Long since it was said, that the highest dogmas of Christianity are like the sun: impenetrable in their essence, they enlighten and vivify those who walk with simplicity in their light, and are dark only for the bold eye which would penetrate them. If we reject them, we must reject Christianity, and reject God; for can we better comprehend an eternal infinite creative being, &c.? Universal absurdity, intellectual imbecility, and idiocy, are the lowest terms of unbelief.

I shall not waste time in refuting the sophisms so often refuted, by which Bayle in his *Dictionnaire*, and Rousseau in his *Lettre à l'Archeveque de Paris*, attempted to demonstrate the flagrant opposition of our mysteries to the first principles of reason. To him who dares yet to accuse us of believing that *three make but one*, and that *the part is greater than the whole*, I should say: "My friend, go to your parish catechism, or rather apply to those simple persons who have just finished it, and they will teach you that you are only a simpleton."

CHAPTER LIII.

IS FAITH AN OBSTACLE TO THE PROGRESS OF KNOWLEDGE? GALILEO.

As to the reproach which is often cast on Christian faith, that it checks freedom of thought and impedes the progress of knowledge, it must be avowed that it is ill supported by facts.

If faith is an incubus upon the intellect, whence comes the immense intellectual superiority of christian over infidel nations? Whence comes it that one christian catechist is sufficient to reduce to silence the most skilful philosophers of India and China, as one English corporal is sufficient to set

at naught all their military science. Whence comes it that among christian nations it is precisely those whose faith is the least flexible, who find themselves placed highest on the intellectual scale? * Whence comes it that in the same nation the greatest names in science, those most universally honored, are christian names?

Who would dare, in scientific and literary departments, to put on the same level the freethinkers of the eighteenth century, and the believers of the seventeenth! We could not without injustice despise the remarkable talents of Voltaire and Rousseau; but what have they gained, or rather what have they not lost, in their ferocious contest against Christianity? For what metaphysical, political, or moral truth are we indebted to their incredulity? What was the fate of science and literature under their direction? *a river of mud which rolled over diamonds.* †

From this enormous mass of "complete works," the man of sense and taste will choose the *diamonds*, that is, a few dramas, which he will rank after those of Corneille and Racine; a few histories, which he will class among his agreeable stories; some eloquent pages almost always Christian, and the rest will serve as food for worms.

Nothing can be imagined more fatal to the mind, than liberty of thought as the unbeliever understands it; that is, the absence of fixed principles upon the important point of religion. Genius without convictions is a fire without fuel, an architect without materials. Give it great truths, it will send forth floods of light; leave it in doubt, it will be extinguished or only give out smoke.

"Everything is floating at the sport of chance," Seneca has well said, "in a mind deprived of principles; hence

* This is demonstrated, history in hand, by the Protestant Cobbett. (Letters on the History of the Reformation, letter 1st.)

* De Maistre, *Examen de la philosophie de Bacon*, tom. ii. ch. vi.

dogmas are indispensable to give to genius a firm and vigorous action.”*

I would ask any man of good sense if the child who knows his catechism, has not ideas infinitely more rational and more elevated concerning God, man, and the universe, than the pretended freethinker, who can neither tell you why nor how he exists, whether he is a spiritual being or an animal, whether he is to die like a brute or live after death? We see him occupying himself with these very interesting questions, but the time employed in the examination is lost to science. Is it said, that in sounding the depths of metaphysics and morals he will make useful discoveries? But what metaphysical or moral truth have philosophers discovered? Have they established anything but doubts during the ages in which they have been promising us a complete system of doctrine.

If instead of fixing his attention on such very grave questions, the freethinker boasts of forgetting them, as is very often the case; if he has only a stupid *what is it to me* for a resolution of the important problem of his destiny, what can we expect great from such an animal.

We are told of atheists distinguished in the sciences. But is a man a genius because he has discovered a new planet, calculated the motion of the stars, increased the list of elementary substances, or invented a new formula or a machine? The man who finds nothing but matter in the universe, will see only facts in it, and will only think of particulars; he will possess nothing of science but its tactics.

Where are to be found names like those of Roger Bacon, Kepler, Copernicus, Galileo, Kircher, Linnæus, Newton, Descartes, Boyle, Pascal, Leibnitz, Gregory of St. Vincent, Euler, Bernouilli, Boscovich, all creators or promoters of science, and all thoroughly christian?

* Quæ res communem sensum facit, eadem perfectum, certarum rerum persuasio, sine quâ omnia in animo mutant. Necessaria ergo sunt decreta, quæ dant animis inflexibile iudicium. (Ep. xcvi.)

Would any one dare to speak of Galileo as *crushed by the anathemas of Rome*, for maintaining the system of Copernicus, after it has more than once been demonstrated from positive testimony that "The sovereign Pontiffs far from retarding the knowledge of the true system of the world, have on the contrary greatly advanced it, and that during two whole centuries, three Popes and three Cardinals have successively sustained, encouraged and recompensed both Copernicus himself and the different astronomers who were more or less successful precursors of this great man; so that it is in a great measure to the Roman Catholic Church that we are indebted for our knowledge of the system of the world?"*

As to Galileo, if he were condemned by the Inquisition, a special tribunal in which no Catholic recognizes the right to fulminate anathemas in matters of doctrine, it is satisfactorily proved that it was not for having adopted the Copernican system, but for wishing to form from it a sort of dogma demonstrable by Scripture; so that in this discussion, it was the Inquisition itself which defended liberty of opinion.†

CHAPTER LIV.

IS THE GOD OF CHRISTIANS A PARTIAL OR CRUEL GOD?

To say that before Jesus Christ, God was solely occupied with the salvation of the Jews, and that he has punished and still punishes in infidels the involuntary ignorance of a revel-

* De Maistre, *Examen*, &c.

† Beside De Maistre, the Protestant Mallet Dupan has written on this subject. (*Mercure de France*, No. 29, 17 April, 1784.)—Tiraboschi, (*Storia della Letteratura Ital.* tom. 8th.)—But especially the *Letters* of Galileo himself.

ation made whether to Jews or Christians, shows total ignorance both of Bible history and the first principles of christian doctrine.

I will not cite the innumerable passages of Scripture which represent to us Jehovah as the common Father of the nations, desirous of the salvation of all his children, and who, without distinction of Jew and Gentile shows himself rich in compassion towards all those who invoke him, and makes every effort that nations, as well as individuals shall not have cause to impute to him their ruin.* Let facts speak for themselves.

From Adam till the call of Abraham, that is, more than two thousand years, we do not see that God had made any other distinction among human families than that which merit and virtue demands. It was when the numerous generations descended from Noah, deaf to the voice of reason and patriarchal traditions, sullied by monstrous rites the earth, still bleeding from the blows of Divine justice, that God chose a man who lived pure in the midst of universal corruption, to preserve in his family, along with the primitive history of the world, the knowledge of the true God, and the fundamental doctrine of the promise of a Redeemer.

The immense posterity of Adam, which was the depository of life and blessedness one day to be diffused over all nations,† was not, as has been supposed, a small nation, buried in an obscure country. Placed on the confines of Europe, Asia and Africa, in constant relations with the Egyptians,

* Qui omnes homines vult salvos fieri, et ad agnitionem veritatis venire. (1. Tim. ii. 4.)—Non enim est distinctio Judæi et Græci: nam idem Dominus omnium, dives in omnes qui invocant illum. (Rom. x. 12.)—Quis tibi imputabit, si perierint nationes, quas tu fecisti? Non enim est alius Deus quàm tu, cui cura est de omnibus, &c. (Sap. xii. 12.)—Whoever reads the *book of Wisdom*, will see what God did in ancient times to open the eyes of the Gentiles, and render their blindness inexcusable.

† In te benedicentur universæ cognationes terræ. (Gen. xii. 3.)

who were famous for their power and wisdom, with the Phenicians whose vessels covered the seas, with the Assyrians and Persians, who were successively masters of Asia, the Jewish nation was still by the remarkable vicissitudes of its existence like a Pharos elevated in the midst of the world to dispel the darkness of idolatry.

We learn from profane historians that the name of Abraham was celebrated throughout all the East; and the first apologists of Christianity proved to the pagans that their wise men had culled the flower of their doctrine from the books of the Jews.*

At the moment when the constantly increasing progress of error had nearly quenched the last light of ancient tradition, the ten tribes who formed the kingdom of Israel were scattered throughout the vast countries of Asia.† A century later the nation of Judah suffered the same fate. Finally, under the Grecian empire, the Bible was translated into the language then universal, and among all the nations Jewish colonies were found to confirm the wonderful narratives of this extraordinary book.‡

So many means of salvation were not offered to the unbelieving in vain. We see in the sacred writings, that a great number of Gentiles adored the true God, some by following the practices of the Jewish law, others by confining themselves to the natural law joined to a faith in the Messiah who was to come.§ It is a principle acknowledged by all the

* St. Justin, *Cohortat*, ad Græc. cap. 14.—St. Clement, *Alex. Stromat.* lib. 1 and 5.—Eusebius, *Præparat. Evang.* lib. 15.—Origen, *contra Cels.* lib. 4.—Theoderet, lib. 1.

† Under king Ozias, A.M. 3285, according to the Hebrew.

‡ It is apparently demonstrated that, before the Christian era, the Jews were established in China and India. See *Annales de la Philosophie chretienne*, vol. 4. p. 120.

§ Esther, viii. 17.—Act. ii. 11.

Fathers and theologians, and even avowed by the Jews, that the Mosaic law was not binding upon other nations, and the examples of Melchisedec, of Job, and of the centurion Cornelius, prove sufficiently that God numbered his elect from the heart of the gentile nation, and even in the camp of the Romans.

It is evident that the election of the Jews was a benefit common to all nations. Preserving the records of the human race, this peculiar people was only what it still is, the *guardian of the word* which was to save the world.*

As to the Christian religion, carried by the Apostles and their first disciples to the extremities of the globe, it has raised everywhere against its followers tempests enough to excite human curiosity and to leave lasting memorials even in the regions from which it has been driven. What nations were more unknown to the ancient world than those of America before its discovery? and yet a hundred years before the arrival of the Spaniards, Christianity had been preached in Mexico.†

If, as we affirm, there are still to be found distant nations who are invincibly ignorant of the name of Christ, religion tells us that they will only be accountable before God for the light which they have received.‡ If infidels recognize that Supreme Being whose existence the spectacle of nature reveals to the grossest minds, and the idea of whom is preserved amidst the thick darkness of idolatry;§ if they conform their conduct to the first principles of morality engraved on all hearts and promulgated by the universal conscience;

* Quid ergo amplius Judæo est? . . . credita sunt illis eloquia Dei. (Rom. iii. 1, 2.)

† See *Annales de la Philosophie chretienne*, vol. 14, p. 82.

‡ Rom. ii.

§ This is a fact proved by the practice and confession of idolaters of every age. See Tertullian, lib. of *Testimonio enim*, &c. Lactance, *Divin. Instit.* lib. ii. cap. 1. Minut Felix, in *Octavio*. St. Cyprian, *De Idolorum vanitate*, &c.

God according to the common opinion of theologians, will not leave them in ignorance of the truths of salvation, even if he must send them one of those celestial intelligences, whose employment it is to increase the number of the heirs of heaven;* and this would not be without example in the annals of Christianity.† But if this absolutely gratuitous favor were refused to them, these infidels would not be in a worse condition than children who have died without baptism.‡

If on the contrary, being guilty in matters of religion, of imprudence which he would avoid in the most trifling affairs of life, the infidel worships Gods whom his reason repudiates, if he does the wrong which his conscience disapproves he carries in himself his own condemnation.

But enough. Instead of occupying ourselves with the fate of infidels, let us rather contemplate the terrible account which we are soon to carry to the tribunal of God, we to whom his Providence has given life in the midst of light. At that fearful moment, how many Christians who have been faithless to their belief will envy the fate of pagans who are more ignorant than guilty!§

CHAPTER LV.

CAN CHRISTIANITY BE ACCUSED OF FANATICISM AND INTOLERANCE ?

Nothing is more unjust than the accusation of fanaticism and intolerance, directed against a religion which commands us to love all men as ourselves, and which permits us to re-

* *Administratorii spiritus, in ministerium missi propter eos, qui hæreditatem capient salutis. (Heb. i. 14.)*

† Acts x. 3. ‡ See as above, ch. 22. § St. Matth. xi. 22, 24.

venge ourselves upon our most cruel enemies only by benedictions, prayers and acts of kindness.*

The same gospel which shows us in the infidel and sinner the slaves of the devil, also teaches us that God loved them so much as to purchase their redemption by the blood of his only Son,† and that in one instant they may become the elect. It then commands us to bear with them in patience and kindness, after the example of our *heavenly Father who maketh his sun to rise upon the good and bad, and raineth upon the just and unjust.*‡ There is not a word in the teaching of Jesus Christ, not a circumstance of his life which authorises the spirit of fanaticism and persecution. The gentleness of the lamb, the simplicity of the dove and the wisdom of the serpent, are the only arms He gives to his disciples for the conquest of the world.§ Let us review the lives of the heroes of Christianity; if we find blood flowing there, it is always their own. Where is blind fanaticism found? in the martyr dying nobly for the defence of an eminently rational and beneficent religion, or in the persecutor murdering men who could be reproached only with their contempt of an absurd and immoral worship? Among the vast, innumerable records of councils and pontifical decrees, to whatever age they belong, not one can be found which sanctions the employment of force in the propagation of the gospel: many, on the other hand, might be cited, which remind princes too blindly zealous, of the principles of Christian gentleness.

If in the middle age, certain Popes, making use of that temporal sovereignty, with which universal opinion had invested them, induced christian princes to take up arms against turbulent sectarians, who were enemies of the state as well as the church, and who, by the terrible corruption of their doctrines and habits, were effacing even the last vestiges of chris-

* Matth. v. 44.—xxii. 39.

† John iii. 17.

‡ Matth. v. 45.

§ Matth. v. 45.

tian civilization, this is rather a subject for praise, and we have seen recently Protestant pens avenging the memory of these great men, and showing us in them the saviors of Europe.*

I shall not speak of the *twelve millions of Americans sacrificed by religion*, nor the massacre of St. Bartholomew directed by priests; those infamous calumnies, fabricated by the philosophical fanaticism of the last century, and contradicted by the evidence of facts, and which are only repeated by stupid ignorance. If religion took part in the massacre of the Indians of the New World, it was to throw itself between the executioners and the victims, as the Presbyterian Robertson avers. As to St. Bartholomew, it is well authenticated, that this horrible butchery was the act of a cruel policy, to which religion only served as a pretext.

To close the eye upon the vast benefit of Christianity, upon the numberless misfortunes which it has consoled and alleviated, upon the millions of lives it has saved and still saves every day by its heroic institutions, and to disinter from history some obscene crimes, in connection with which we find the name of a monk or a priest, this was the mania of the writers of the school of Femy, a species of vultures who passed in swift flight over fields covered with delicious fruits to seize on carrion.

Does it belong, then, to an incredulous philosophy to reproach us with fanaticism and intolerance, when she exhibited to us not long ago, in a most humane nation, scenes of barbarity unknown to cannibals, and whose reign of eight years was a perpetual St. Bartholomew! She would in vain disclaim the responsibility of it. The correspondence of Voltaire and his followers, a monument of unprecedented fanaticism, proves that *if they saw not all they did, they did all that we saw.*†

* See, among others *La Vie d'Innocent III.* by Hurter.

† Words of Condorcet, in *La Vie de Voltaire.*

CHAPTER LVI.

DOES CHRISTIANITY FAVOR DESPOTISM?

THAT Christianity promotes despotism, is a false reproach, cast upon the history of Christian ages!

Who then has revealed to the world and promulgated that truth, the source of public and private liberty, that men in whatever rank of the social scale they are placed, are all equal before God, their only true Father and Master, all equally dear to his heart and all destined to reign with him in the splendor of his glory! *

Who has covered with eternal ridicule the mad desire common to infidel princes, of taking their place among the Gods? who has imposed silence on the sophistical rhetoricians of Greece and Rome, always ready to banish Jupiter from his temples in order to instal in them indifferently either a Nero or a Titus? Who has forced the Cæsars to recognise under the tatters of the lowest of slaves, their brother and even their protector near him who crushes as glass empires and emperors.

Let us consider the ancient world, and modern nations not yet Christianized. Pride has every where destroyed the unity of the human family, and raised an impassable barrier between prince and subject, high and low, man and woman; religion every where consecrates the distinction of castes, and sets its seal on the chains of slaves; philosophy every where preserves a profound silence concerning these cruel aberrations, or only opens her mouth to justify them. †

* Matth. xxiii. 9, 10.—Sap. xii. 13.

† The most humane and profound of ancient philosophers, Aristotle, endeavors to prove that nature condemns most men to servitude, and while refuting the philosophers of his age who denied to slaves the

But Christianity does not confine herself to establishing the principle of equality in the human mind: she has carried it into the life; she has realised it in the institutions, which would have overwhelmed the ancient sages with astonishment, but which we hardly notice.

She has ordained that princes and nobles should meekly prostrate themselves with the people at the feet of Supreme Majesty and recognize that *God alone is great*. She has ordained that in our Heavenly Father's mansions, indiscriminately opened to beggars and kings, a man taken like David from the midst of his flocks,* should often summon sovereigns before the christian tribunal to be judged by the King of kings, to teach them that their authority is only a stream which flows from the celestial paternity, a divinely delegated power to procure the welfare of their subjects, and that, if God has distinguished them from the rest of men, it is only by the extent of duties he imposes upon them, and by the terrible account that he will soon demand of them for its performance. † She has ordained under pain of anathema, that sovereign and subjects should seat themselves *at least once a year*, at the same table and eat the same bread.

Finally, by her divinely philanthropic doctrines, she has so ennobled the lowest in society, that we see every year great

title of *reasonable beings*, he does not hesitate to say that they *are like the brute, excluded from happiness*. (Politic. lib. i. cap. iii; lib. iii. cap. vi.) Cato, *the most just, the most virtuous, the most holy teacher that the Divinity had given to men*, according to Seneca the rhetorician, (Controv. lib. i. proëm.) offered his old and infirm slaves for sale, and advised all masters to do the same, *in order*, as he said, *not to support useless beings*. See his life by Plutarch, and his Treatise *de Re rusticâ*.

* De post fætantes accepit eum. (Ps. lxxxvii. 70.)

† The judgment to which the Egyptians subjected their kings who had been dethroned by death, has been much celebrated; and yet no one commends the public judgment and perpetual control to which Christianity subjects her reigning sovereigns!

princes stooping even to wash the feet of the indigent, and honoring in the lowest of their subjects, the representative of God made poor for the love of us. And is the religion, which works such miracles, accused of favoring despotism! what short sightedness, great God! or rather what blindness!

Is it said, that if Christianity forbids insurrections from any cause, one monster would suffice to chain and slay twenty millions of men: an absurd supposition, which could only occur to the mind of the author of the *Social Contract*!* Among nations who have been constantly faithful to Christianity there cannot be found one of those crowned ogres, so common among infidel nations.

Place a Nero over a firmly christian people; public opinion, *that great mistress of affairs*, would forbid him even the thought of evil. Would he order crimes, if he were certain that he should be disobeyed! when all, men, women, youths and children would say to him: "God forbids you to require that and us to permit it to you." Witness those thousands of young virgins and christian children whom history shows us, reproving emperors and their ministers, before the funeral pile!—Will the tyrant slay, when the soldiers answer him, with one voice as the heroes of the Theban legion! "Sire, we have taken up arms against your enemies and those of the empire, not against your faithful subjects and our brothers."

Will the prince become the executioner and after the example of Commodus, arm himself with club or steel to kill or mutilate the man who first approaches him? The day that this fancy seized him, he would fall into the hands of physicians; the next day the churches would re-echo with prayers for the recovery of his Majesty, and if it was too long delayed the government would be confided to a regency.

To enthrone the bloodthirsty over a nation, Religion must have been banished from it, which only repeats:

* Livre iv. ch.

*"Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai pas d'autre crainte."**

It is when the Christian tribunal is silent, that the Robespierres come with lists of proscription and armies of executioners.

In this case, what is the part of Christians? If they believe themselves strong enough to overthrow the oppressors of the country and establish a government in harmony with the wishes of a sound majority, Religion permits them to arm themselves, and she will make them heroes by the sentiments she inspires. We should then see as in 1793, bands of peasants, with the rosary around their neck, a musket or a scythe in hand, destroying in a few months numerous and warlike armies, and driving to within a hair's breadth of ruin a power which made Europe tremble, and obtaining from Napoleon the title of "*People of giants*."

If, on the contrary, the Christians are too feeble, above all, if they are in the presence of an established authority, recognized by a large number, and whose destruction would plunge the state in anarchy, what should be done? Religion, coinciding with good sense, answers as the father of the Horatii: "Let them die!"—Let them die rather than aggravate, by an inconsiderate resistance, the fate of the country, in giving it a hundred tyrants in the place of one.† Let them die rather than perpetuate tyranny by yielding basely to its demands. Their death will be of more advantage to liberty than that of their persecutors. The blood of martyrs is fatal to tyranny. The first Christians reasoned thus, St. Maurice and his six thousand heroes; thus reason still the Christians of Tonquin and Cochinchina.

You who would prefer that they should act the Brutus, calculate the consequences. Brutus, when he shed the blood

* I fear God, dear Abner, and have no other fear.

† Fremere deinde multiplicatam servitutem: centum pro uno dominos factos. (Tit. Liv. *Decad.* 1, lib. 1, cap. xvii.)

of Cæsar, delivered his country over to the fury of the Triumvirate, and the Triumvirate commenced the most protracted and disgraceful tyranny which has ever bowed down the human head. Christians, on the contrary, by dying nobly in defence of liberty of conscience, teach their fellow-citizens that the power of the prince has other limits than his will; and thirty years had scarcely passed after the massacre of Agaune (A. D. 286) than the Cæsars were forced to acknowledge in the face of the empire, that they had a Master and a Judge in Heaven.

Religion is certainly far from favoring despotism, she who first teaches sovereigns, that they are *the ministers of Divine benevolence*, and that they must reign according to the laws,* and subjects that there are circumstances in which they must answer "*No*" even till death.†

CHAPTER LVII.

DOES CHRISTIANITY RENDER MEN IMBECILE?—IS IT THE ENEMY OF GREAT ENTERPRISES?

It shows great ignorance of Christianity and its history to charge it with checking social progress, being opposed to great enterprises, and forming lifeless, indifferent characters, strangers to the interests of this world.

* *Dei enim minister est tibi in bonum.* (Rom. xiii. 4.) It is very remarkable that in the minds of the most enlightened pagans, legality and monarchy were incompatible. *Quidam* (populi) says Tacitus, *Regum pertasi leges maluerunt.* (Annal. iii. 26.)

† The extreme severity of the Eastern nations is well known. It would be difficult to find in all Asia a subject courageous enough to say *no* to his sovereign. But among the Siamese such a man would be a true prodigy. Baptism is every day multiplying these prodigies. "Of

The true Christian is in fact he who lives the most in the least time.* Subtract from a year the idle hours of which half the life of most men is composed, take away the time given to pride, vanity, the desire to please, to curiosity, the trifling of love, the table and pastime; how many hours are gained in a day! how many days in a month or a year!

Would the miser to whom Cræsus should open his treasures and say, "Come and take what pleases you, for soon my coffers will be closed," find that he had time to lose? Such is the Christian. He knows that the fleeting moments of life have been given him only to seize the treasures of Divine munificence.† He knows that at the end of the day the Father of the family, will come with that justice which does not pardon even an idle word,‡ with that liberality which does not leave without its reward even a glass of cold water given in his name.§ He knows that true piety consists not in the length of his prayers, but in a constant application to the duties of his station, and that the prayers which ascend highest towards heaven are those of the unhappy whom he has consoled, and the orphans to whom he has been a father.

Hence his continual care not to lose a moment; time is worth as much to him as heaven, which is its recompense. Hence the attention he pays to every act: like Apelles and even more than Apelles, he *labors for eternity*. Hence his passion for works useful to his neighbor: he knows that God receives as if done for himself what we do for our brethren.||

Is not this what we see in the life of the Christian models! What days are theirs! And here I will not speak of the

all my subjects, said recently the present king of Siam, the Christians are the only persons who know how to say *No*." *Annales de la Propagation de la Foi*, 1, t. v. p. 131.

* Consummatus in brevi explevit tempora multa. (Sap. iv. 13.)

† Ergo dum tempus habemus, operemur bonum. (Galat. vi. 10.)

‡ Matth. xii. 36. § Matth. x. 42. || Matth. xxv. 40.

poor priest Vincent de Paul, whose works of public utility surpass all that human philanthropy, disposing of the treasures of kings, could ever have conceived; but I will say: "See these hosts of girls whom his charity has given for mothers and servants to those who have none. See that throng of fathers of families, ladies and young persons whom their energy unites every week in committees to go forth from them into the abodes of indigence, to be certain that no unfortunate person escapes their beneficence. Is it these who are reproached with apathy and indifference!

I will not speak of a Francis Xavier, the christian Alexander, who in ten years, conquered fifty-two kingdoms, planted the standard of faith over an extent of three thousand leagues, and proved that *charity goes farther than pride*.*

But see those priests with heroic hearts who tear themselves away from the charms of country to carry to nations who have scarcely the semblance of man, the knowledge which guides to heaven and the arts which soften the rigor of the terrestrial journey. Is it they who are reproached with saintly idleness, and repugnance to great enterprises? Are they wanting in patriotism? Ask our navigators, ask the neophytes of the South Seas, and you will find that next to the name of God, the French name is the first which their mouth blesses.

I will not speak of Charlemagne, Alfred the Great and Louis the Ninth, whom the gratitude and admiration of the nations, as well as their virtues have transferred from the throne to the altar. But read the *Life of Stanislas the Beneficent*, or rather traverse Lorraine and you will see the great and marvellous things that a truly Christian prince can accomplish with a very small revenue.

If from individuals we pass to nations, we shall find that they have never developed so great a power of action as

* Fénelon, *Sermon pour l'Épiphanie*, Œuv. t. xvii. p. 152.

when they have been guided by Christian inspiration. Certainly it is not the age of the crusades which has failed in enthusiasm for great deeds. We cannot reproach the twelfth, thirteenth or fourteenth centuries with imbecility, Cyclopean ages which have covered the soil of Europe with innumerable monuments whose beauty, solidity and grandeur astonish and confound our weakness.* It was the same in the fifteenth century, which was "that of the greatest external activity of men, an age of voyages, enterprises, discoveries and inventions of all sorts."†

"Will our age leave as many memorials of its course, as the time of our fathers? . . . The exercise of reason and of industry can do nothing but build exchanges, warehouses, manufactures, bazaars, cafés and pleasure-houses; in the cities economical establishments; in the country, cottages, and in every direction small tombs. In five or six centuries, when Religion and philosophy discharge their accounts, when they reckon the days which were theirs, and each makes out the register of their ruins, on which side will the largest portion of life have passed away, on which side will be the largest sum of recollections? ‡

* If we wish to ascertain to what extent France has been covered with these monuments, Jacques Cœur has counted seventeen hundred thousand steeples . . . sum total of monuments (churches, chapels, villas, chateaux, &c.,) one million eight hundred and seventy-two thousand, nine hundred and twenty-six. Chateaubriand, *Etudes Historiques*, tom. iii.

† Guizot, *Cours d'Histoire Moderne*, xi. leçon.

‡ Chateaubriand, *Etudes Historiques*, tom. iii.

CHAPTER LVIII.

CONCLUSION.

I WOULD ask of all those for whom this book is intended, readers wavering in faith or borne far away on the waves of doubt or the currents of opinion, but whose heart has not yet made an indissoluble compact with incredulity, how does it seem to you that I have fulfilled my task? *Can man be a man without being a Christian?*

I have brought before your eyes a feeble portion of the rays of the sun of truth, at a distance from which there is thick darkness in the intellect, and an icy chill in the heart. Will not those among you who do not yet feel the need of believing, at least feel the obligation to examine. Indeed it is worth the trouble.

Would you remain idle if, in order to take rank among the princes of this world, you had in your portfolio one only of the numerous titles which establish the claims of Christianity to your faith? Would you say, "Of what importance is it to me?" But could the eternal crown which Religion offers you be less in your eyes than one of those terrestrial crowns which death dashes in pieces against our grave stone, when revolutions do not cast them into the mire! What is demanded of you by him who exhorts you to study Religion? He wishes you to examine if it is true that the day when Christianity impressed its seal upon your brow, at the entrance of our temples, you became the adopted son of the great sovereign of time and eternity; if it is true that in the abode of glory, near the throne surrounded by hosts of celestial intelligences, there is a seat destined for you, which you cannot renounce without falling into a fathomless abyss of abjectness

and misery ; if it is true that the fleeting moments of life are granted you only to prepare for this sublime destiny.

At least acknowledge that Christianity wonderfully ennobles man, and if it is a very dull intellect which resists the evidence of its proofs, it must be a very base heart which is insensible to the grandeur of its promises.

Abandon its doctrines, what have you left ?

What is man ? a mere digestive tube.

What distinguishes him from his dog ? He has speech, but two feet less.

What does he do upon the earth ?— . . He digests.

END OF VOL. I.

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RELIGION IN SOCIETY,
OR THE
SOLUTION OF GREAT PROBLEMS;

PLACED WITHIN
THE REACH OF EVERY MIND.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF THE ABBE MARTINET.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION
BY THE
RT. REV. JOHN HUGHES, D. D.
BISHOP OF NEW-YORK.

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THE SOLUTION OF GREAT PROBLEMS.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IT IS TO BE A CHRISTIAN.

To admire the wonderful poetry of Christian worship, to fall into ecstasies before the architectural enchantments of the middle ages, and to cast the reproach of ignorance and barbarism upon the despisers of those heroic times, is not to be a Christian; it is to show oneself an artist.

To ridicule the sarcasms and anti-biblical reasonings of Voltaire, to purify the pages of history from the foul stains with which this impure spirit has sullied them, and to recognize that the appearance of Christ in the world was a vast benefit, is not to be a Christian; it is to prove one's knowledge and skill in criticism, and carry candid judgment into history.

To extol the excellence of evangelical morality, and show its profound harmony with the deep wants of man, and its happy influence over the individual, the family, and society; to celebrate the divine character of Jesus, and show that he is infinitely superior to the wise men of the earth, whose conduct contradicts their words, when their words do not contradict the truth, is not being a Christian; there is nothing in all this which the most violent enemies of Christianity do not

avow in their lucid moments. The author of the Koran has recognized the organ of the Divinity in the son of Mary.

What, then, is the characteristic of the Christian? It is to recognize in Christ the three prerogatives inherent in the title of Saviour of the world, and which he assumes when he says: "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but through me."*

To be a Christian is then, in the first place, to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, and reproduce in our conduct the image of this perfect model of the children of God.

To be a Christian is, in the second place, to conform our thought to that of Jesus Christ, by an unwavering faith in all his teachings.

To be a Christian is, in the third place, to incorporate ourselves with Jesus Christ and maintain ourselves in those intimate relations by which this Divine Head of the elect sends his life circulating through all his members.

A certain knowledge and public profession of the doctrine of Christ; the use of the means established by him to heal the infirmities of man and guide him towards God; a life in harmony with the precepts of the Gospel, and the examples of the Divine Master, such are the three conditions the union of which forms the true Christian.

The religious society which can alone realize these conditions in all its members, and which does in fact realize them in a great number, is without doubt, the only true society of the disciples of Christ.

To obtain light in our search for this society, let us commence by forming a just idea of faith, that first foundation of the Christian life.

* John xiv. 6.

CHAPTER II

IDEA OF FAITH.—ITS NECESSITY.

WHAT is this Faith which is placed by Christianity at the head of the virtues, and without which, we are told, *it is impossible to please God*.

It is a disposition of the mind and heart to believe God upon his word, even when the truths which he is pleased to reveal to us surpass our understanding.

What can be more just than such a disposition? Has not God a right to the honor which we every day pay our fellow men, when we admit so many important facts on their testimony alone?

Let the man who boasts the most of his reason cast a glance upon the treasure of his knowledge, let him separate that which he owes to the light of evidence, to the labor of reflection, to his own researches, from what he has received on the authority of others, and he will agree, with Seneca, that the portion obtained by faith is incontestably the richest.*

It is faith, that is, confidence in the knowledge and probity of men, which determines us in the more important affairs of life, most of which besides are not within the range of our investigations. It is to our parents, to an agent, a lawyer, a financier, a merchant, a physician, our servants, that we refer what belongs to our civil condition, our alliances, our fortune, our health, our life.

Now, could we refuse this credit which we give so freely to mistaken and often deceitful men, to the divine testimony, which is essentially pure from error and deceit?† The skeptic, however, does this.

“I have my reason,” says he; “to judge it incompetent to

* Ep. xciv.

† John i. Ep. v. 9.

guide me, would be an outrage against God from whom I have received it."

You have your reason, but God also has his, richer no doubt in knowledge than yours; for he is the eldest and the first of thinkers. If then it pleases him to make known to you some of the truths which escape your very short-sighted and uncertain reason, is it not right that you should accept this communication with submission and gratitude? Would not the refusal of it be an outrage upon your reason and upon him who has bestowed it on you?

You have your reason, but it is precisely because he has imparted to you this ray of his intelligence that God speaks to you. He does not speak to the brute. "It is by the sublime gift of reason," said a pagan sage, "that man is distinguished from the animals, and is united to God."*

What is reason, then, when we look at it more closely? The faculty of knowing and learning; a faculty which is only developed by external teaching. If God takes upon himself this instruction, if he assumes the title of *teacher of man*,† does it become man to be displeased at it! Truth is to reason what light is to the eye: to say: We have reason, what need of revelation? is to say in the darkness of midnight: we have eyes, what need of light?

Let us admit that reason can guide us to the knowledge of all necessary truth, it certainly would be by long and laborious researches which surpass the power of the generality of men. It is indeed then worthy of the benevolence of Our Heavenly Father to furnish all his children, by external instruction, with a prompt and sure method of attaining truth and virtue, without exposing them to grope in the dim paths of ontology and psychology. According to this hypothesis, which all rational and historical facts render very

* Cicero, *De Legibus*, lib. i.

† Qui docet hominem scientiam. (Ps. xciii. 10.)

plausible, to prefer the tedious and fruitless labors of human thought to divine teaching, would be a manifest abuse of reason and an affected contempt of God.

But is it true that reason alone can teach man so much as to render the Divine Word superfluous?

CHAPTER III.

POWERLESSNESS OF REASON.—PRETENSIONS OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRESENT DAY.—NECESSITY OF REVELATION.

As I have before said, man remains necessarily beneath himself, and cannot come out of the animal sphere of brutality, until he has penetrated the mystery of his existence, knows, beyond a doubt, what he is, whence he comes, whither he is going, what he must do and avoid here below, and what he may hope and fear at the end of his course.*

Now, upon these capital questions, what are, what can be the instructions of reason? What hand can raise the thick veil of generation and show us the starting point of man, at his stolen entrance into life. What eye can follow him beyond the tomb? The witnesses of his sorrows and his misery during his short passage from the cradle to the grave, we are equally ignorant of their origin and remedy.

For three thousand years during which the most powerful minds have been exercising themselves on these problems, many solutions have been given. Most of them have only increased the sum of human extravagance. Those which good sense can accept without blushing, do not go beyond the limits of conjecture and it is not with conjectures that

* First Problem, ch. ii.

man can be reformed. Would his passions, which too often brave the strongest convictions, willingly yield to a timid *perhaps*?

Is the philosophy of the nineteenth century more successful? Its disciples do not doubt it. "Philosophy is always for them the light of lights, the authority of authorities, the only authority."* They *refer philosophically in all things to the authority of the human mind.*†

"Struck with the imperfections of a solution, which has governed the world for eighteen hundred years, and convinced that at the present day none can be proposed for the acceptance of the masses, on the claim that it has been revealed, . . . there remains but one way, one means according to them, to come to the assistance of society in peril; that is to agitate philosophically those formidable problems, for which a solution is absolutely needed; it is to seek in sincerity by the rigorous processes of science a solution as rigorous, which can endure the severe examination of that reason into whose hands civilization has transferred the sceptre of authority."‡

But while it pleases these gentlemen to open the eyes of the human race by a solution every way indisputable, death pursues its course. Every second, one man dies; every minute, sixty; every hour, three thousand six hundred; every day, eighty-six thousand, four hundred; every year, thirty-one million, five hundred and thirty-six thousand; and every century, about three thousand millions.

Where are these poor blind men going? Where have these innumerable generations gone who have preceded us, if hitherto no one has been found who could point out to them the path of truth which leads to life, the path of error which leads to death? An idle question, it is true, in the eyes of our

* M. Cousin, *Cours de l'Histoire de la Philosophie*. Introd. 1st leçon.

† M. Lermnier, *Revue des Deux Mondes*. tom. vii. p. 738.

‡ M. Jouffroy, *Du Problème de la Destinée Humaine*.

professors of philosophy. Of what importance is the salvation or destruction of two hundred thousand millions of men to them, provided that some fine morning they can have the satisfaction of saying to their followers: "Rejoice, my friends; of all the great days of humanity this day is the greatest, for it opens a new era, the era of eras, the era of truth! If this supreme monarch of the intellect has chosen me for her first organ, she destines you to become her first apostles. Give me your attention! I am going to show you at the very centre of objective evidence the three terms of universal science. God, man and the universe!"

Yet, if in order to obtain for themselves the sublime office of inventors of truth, the eaglets of our universities, dispose so comfortably of three hundred generations of men who have had the misfortune to die before the opening of our courses of transcendental philosophy, our God does not move so rapidly. He tenderly cherishes our souls, he who has created them in his likeness and animated them with the breath of his love.* *He who will have all men to be saved by leading them to a knowledge of the truth,*† must he not show them the way from the beginning? Witnesses of the great liberality with which he provides for the support of the body, could we doubt that he has furnished to our spirits their celestial food!

Who, then, but the Creator can tell us how, and why, he has called the universe and man into existence? You who, for the solution of these problems appeal exclusively to the intellect of man, if pride had not blinded your eyes a thousand fold more thickly than the veil of faith, you would without doubt comprehend that your pretension is absurd. Can this mind of man which scarcely sees the depth of its own thought, read the thought of God and wrest from eternal wisdom its secrets?

* Sap. xi, ult.

† I. Tim. ii. 4.

He must be very blind who does not see that the final cause of being, lies in the bosom of its author. No human eye can reach that; but *the only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father hath declared to us himself* what it imports us to know.*

CHAPTER IV.

EXISTENCE OF REVELATION.—EXTRAVAGANCE OF RATIONALISM.

GOD has spoken to men, and has not left to their feeble reason the solution of the obscure enigma of their destiny: such has always been, such is still the universal belief. There is no nation without religion, no religion which has not been, in the eyes of its believers, the child of Heaven.

Ancient philosophy, after long and useless efforts to raise the thick cloud which conceals from man the view of his past and his future, recognizes its powerlessness, and its most illustrious organs have avowed "that men could never be reformed in their life, nor instructed in their true duties towards the Divinity and their fellow men, until a messenger from Heaven should undertake it."†

God spoke to the human race in its head, and after forty centuries of more or less active communication with the children of men, he vouchsafed to speak to us *by his Son who descended on the earth full of grace and truth*,‡ such has been for eighteen hundred years the unanimous faith of the Christian world.

* Deum nemo vidit unquam: Unigenitus Filius, qui est in sinu Patris, ipse enarravit. (John i. 18.)

† Plato, in Aleib. 11.—Apol. Socrat.

‡ John i. 14.

This faith, very different from the vain opinions which plant themselves so easily in the popular mind, because they derange nothing there, and leave to man independence of thought and action, has transformed everything, absorbed everything, impregnated everything with her spirit, public and private life, political and civil institutions, the sciences, fine arts, &c. Furiously resisted by the passions, which she came to dethrone, she has obtained, and still obtains from her disciples, what never has been granted to an opinion, the voluntary sacrifice of life. Violently assailed by the false philosophers whom she accuses of ignorance and folly, she must necessarily make good her position in the sphere of intelligence, and our libraries are crowded with master-pieces of eloquence, controversy, erudition and criticism which she has opposed to the sophisms of unbelief.

Victorious over sophists and executioners, the christian faith has made itself felt even by matter. Metals, stone, marble, canvass, under the hand of the artist, have declared in a thousand forms the incarnation of the author of all things.

Mad men who see nothing but a myth in this stupendous event, enumerate, I will not say, the worshippers of Christ, the lips which invoke his name at the moment of danger, the hands which grasp his cross when passing over the gulf of death; but only those numerous temples reared at so great a cost by the faith of nations, those religious monuments of every kind, those crosses which cover the soil of our cities and our countries, and crown the loftiest summits; number our universities, our schools, our asylums, our hospitals, our houses of refuge, our monasteries; listen to the religious sounds which descend many times a day from innumerable aerial towers to remind the people of the God *made flesh*; and then say if all this is the work of folly!

Read the inscription engraved everywhere upon the monu-

ments of cities as well as on the thatched cabins of the country, that date which determines the birth-time of individuals and empires, classifies all events, presides over public and private acts, and shines forth from the frontispiece of your infamous productions—for it is always in *the year of Christ, the year of grace and truth, eighteen hundred, &c.*, that you undertake to teach the world that there is neither Christ, nor grace, nor truth; and then say: Does not all this manifest a great absurdity?

Who are you, then, that accuse the human race of bigotry? By assailing the universal conviction, do you not place yourselves without the pale of human reason?

What is that human mind *to which you would appeal with regard to all things*? It is your individual mind with which you would wish to control thousands of opposing minds. What is that philosophy which you would oppose without ceasing to Christianity as the *authority of authorities, the only authority*? It is not a doctrine (show us its creed); it is not a society (find two philosophers who think alike); it is always an individual, that is, a two hundred and sixty millionth part of the christian population, who seating himself in a chair, or seizing the pen in his closet, charges with imbecility all present and past generations, and announces that truth, that great unknown of the ages, is about to manifest itself in him!

Among men of sense I find none but physicians whose attention is demanded by such extravagance. Let us then abandon the rationalist to their charitable cares and addressing ourselves to the two hundred and sixty millions of Christians who are so unanimous when they are called upon to affirm that God has spoken to us through Christ, and let us ask of them what Christ has said and what religion he has given to men.

At this question a multitude of discordant voices rise on every side, and prove to us by their antagonism that the

christian family has not escaped the scandals and ruptures predicted by its head and his first disciples.*

Let us cast a glance over these rival societies, each of which boasts of having alone rightly comprehended the doctrine of Christ.

CHAPTER V.

SKETCH OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNIONS.—COULD THEY ALL BE THE WORK OF CHRIST?—LATITUDINARIAN SYSTEM. ITS PRINCIPLES.

AT the head of christian communities, stands the Catholic Church, which surpasses them all by its antiquity, the number of its members and the perfect unity of its doctrine. Ask that young peasant just coming from catechism what his church believes, he will teach you; and all the Catholics in the world, from the Roman Pontiff to the neophyte of the South Sea Islands will confirm with a solemn *amen* the words of the child.

Then come the Churches of the East, detached at different periods from the catholic stem. Some, which separated in the fifth and sixth century, small in numbers, vegetate in isolation in Persia, India, Syria, Abyssinia and Egypt; such are the Nestorians, who deny the unity of person in Jesus Christ; the Jacobites or Monophysites, who deny the distinction of natures. Others, more numerous, were drawn into the schism which took place between the ninth and eleventh century, through the ambition of the two patriarchs of Constantinople, Photius and Michael Cerularius. With the ex-

* Necessè est enim ut veniant scandala. (Matth. xviii. 7.) Nam oportet hæreses esse. (I. Cor. xix. 19.)

ception of the supremacy of the Roman Pontiff, which they agree in denying, their faith would not differ from that of Catholics, as well as we can judge by their symbolic books, condemned as they are to a profound silence, some under the Mussulman scimitar, others under the despotic administration of the Russian Autocrat.

The last in date of the christian societies, but also the most abundant in professions of faith, is Protestantism. Springing into life in the 16th century, at the voice of a Saxon monk, who taught the world that, for ten centuries, the universal church passing from one abomination into another, had at last fallen into the power of Satan, it undertook to reform the work of Christ. A stupendous labor, which three centuries have not been able to accomplish! for Protestantism is always reforming. Divided from the commencement into Lutheranism, Calvinism, and Anglicanism, it has seen each of its branches subdivided into a multitude of opposing sects. Their names alone would fill a volume; the exposition of their doctrines and their worship would form a library.

*Could Christ be divided?** Could He who has ordained that the most perfect union should be the distinctive sign of His disciples, He who has formed of His sheep one flock guided by one Shepherd†—could He be the head of these innumerable societies, as different in faith as in practice, and armed with anathemas against each other? Would He equally ratify in Heaven all religious decrees, under whatever authority they appear here below—whether that of the Pope, of the Czar, the King of Prussia, or the Queen of England, of a Lutheran consistory, or a Calvinistic synod?

Could Christ speak indifferently through the mouth of the minister who preaches his divinity, and the minister who denies it? Would he teach among Catholics and Oriental

* *Divisus est Christus?* (I. Cor. i. 13.)

† Luke x. 16.—John xvii. 21, 22, 23.

nations the real presence and transubstantiation, among Lutherans the presence without transubstantiation, and would he teach Calvinists and Anglicans to ridicule both? Would he be satisfied that some should attribute to him seven sacraments, others two, others none? Would he regard with the same eye the temples where he is adored as the victim of propitiation on the altar, and the temples where the eucharistic sacrifice is treated as an invention of hell? Would he require us to recognize the divine influence of his grace in the silent meetings where the Quakers wait for the Holy Spirit to reveal to one of them the truths of salvation, which are concealed from the rest of mankind, and in the tumultuous meetings of the Methodists, where justification is only obtained by cries, howling, jumping, and gambols?

Could Christ graciously associate himself with all the impiety, all the absurdities, and all the extravagances which man is pleased to attribute to him? Would the equality of worships, consecrated by certain legislations of the earth, be also an article of the divine charter?

“And why not?” answer the latitudinarians; that is, those among the Protestants, who, wishing to enlarge the way to Heaven, which Christ declares so narrow,* have judged it best to remove from it everything which could prevent men from crowding into it. Christianity, revised and corrected by them, would indeed be reduced to a very trifling affair. All that is essential, according to them, in evangelical doctrine and morality, is to believe that God spoke to us, by Christ, without inquiring too closely what he has said, and to regard and treat all men as our brothers. The rest would be only harmless materials for human disputes. As to that grotesque assemblage of contradictory worship and faith, which shocks our feeble reason, latitudinarians only see in it

* Matth. vii. 14.

a spectacle adapted to please the divine eye, which is unfriendly to monotony.

This system, which, since the time of the minister Jurieu, its inventor, has made immense progress in the ranks of Protestantism, has the misfortune, it is true, of indeed coming a little too late. Why, in fact, should Europe be set on fire for two centuries? Why that ferocious assault upon the Catholic Church, if its pretended superstitions allowed the fundamental doctrine of Christ to remain intact?

But, although invented too late, latitudinarianism or indifference (it is the same thing) is a no less precious discovery for those sectarians, who, seeing one doctrine after another melt away in their hands, have believed that christian charity would succeed in covering with its mantle this vast sepulchre of creeds.

Yet, to escape the reproach of impiety and folly, the latitudinarian must necessarily establish as a principle, and convert into a demonstrable fact, one of the three following hypotheses:—

1st. Christ has taught but one thing; that is, that he is the messenger from God. He has imposed only one duty upon men; that of loving each other.

2d. If to these two dogmas the author of Christianity has added others, it is evidently in the form of conversation, and leaving his disciples full liberty to accept or reject them.

3d. Even if Christ had wished to impose on his disciples a complete system of faith, and a minute law of duty, it is evident that he has taken no sure means to perpetuate the knowledge of it; and the state of inability in which he has left us to discover the true doctrine, must extenuate, at the tribunal of divine justice, the difference of religious opinions.

Let us examine briefly these three hypotheses, under both the evangelical and rational point of view.

CHAPTER VI.

ABSURDITY OF THE FIRST HYPOTHESIS.—NATURE AND
NECESSITY OF MYSTERIES.

IF Christ descended from heaven only to say to us, "Know that I am the messenger from God, and that you should all regard yourselves as His children," good sense perceives but one thing in this prodigious phenomenon,—the total eclipse of that sovereign sagacity which always proportions the strength of means to the greatness of the end.

What could be indeed more futile or more supremely absurd than the office of the Christ, who, after having kept the world in expectation for forty centuries, at length appears, justifies His divine mandate by various miracles, then, at the moment when the world, convinced, is waiting for great revelations, ascends suddenly to Heaven, to enjoy there, doubtless, the strange embarrassment in which He leaves mortals! This would be an undertaking worthy of those juggling gods of India, who came every five or six thousand years to disport upon the earth, and provoke the merriment even of their worshippers.

The divine character of Christ, and the brotherhood of men, are certainly two admirable features; but, separated from the truths which form their indispensable accompaniment, what can be their intellectual and moral bearing? By the numerous unanswerable questions which they raise, they would be a new enigma added to other enigmas, an increase of the thick darkness which enveloped the human mind before the coming of Christ.

Such is the fate of this great achievement of divine favor and wisdom, in the hands of those reformers who wish for a religion without mystery—a *would-be reasonable Christianity*

To those profound doctrines, eminently consoling and rich in moral results, which are connected with the idea of the Word *made flesh*, succeed nonentities and absurdities; and the God of the latitudinarians, fashioned after their likeness, by reason of his simplicity, becomes a fool.

Whatever idea we form of the founder of Christianity, as soon as the quality of ambassador of the Most High and Redeemer of humanity is granted him, we must necessarily allow him also the mission of teaching to the world, not a few truths only, but all truth, which alone is capable of liberating the human mind that had become the sport of all errors.* No moral regeneration was possible without a luminous and complete body of doctrine which should restore the almost extinguished idea of divine sovereignty, and oblige man, by the double motive of fear and love, to quit his pride and his egotism, and to re-establish himself in true relations with God and his fellow-men.

Man must, indeed, expect mysteries in instruction emanating from so high a source, and embracing universal science. Among many reasons which might be given for this, I shall only allude to a few.

1. The Divine Revealer could not limit himself to the sphere of reason, according to the example of philosophers, who convince only by the authority of evidence, and inspire faith by the aid of demonstrations alone. Strong in the testimony of his works,† he had a right to demand belief, and his words, in order to be comprehended by all, must necessarily abandon a scientific form. Can we refuse to the Divine Lawgiver that right which is granted to the fallible legislators of this world, to prescribe what they deem conformable to good order, without giving a reason for their laws?

* Veritas liberabit vos . . . Docebit vos omnem veritatem. (John viii. 32. xvi. 13.)

† John v. 36.

Can he demand nothing from us until he has first initiated us into the secrets of the eternal order? What would become of society in those places where the letter of the laws are binding on those only who comprehend the spirit of them?

2d. Religious truth, rightly understood, is only God revealing himself to our intelligence. It is then essentially unlimited and infinite, and could not fall entire within the limits of human comprehension, even if it were uttered by a divine mouth. A true religion, without mysteries, would be the finite containing the Infinite, which is a glaring absurdity.

3dly. Mystery is a desire of the heart of man—a merciless destroyer of the truths which his thought comprehends.* He only yields respect and obedience to those which command him and connect him with that Infinite Being towards whom an irresistible instinct attracts him.

4thly. Finally, the perfectibility of the human mind evidently implies mystery. There is no progress without the transition from ignorance to simple knowledge, and from this to perfect intelligence. Truths are always known before being comprehended.† They present themselves as facts,

* *Diminutiæ sunt veritates à filiis hominum.* (Ps. xi. 2.) These words express well the fatal art which man possesses of destroying truths by analyzing them. Truth is being; as there is only one self-subsisting Being, through whom everything subsists, there is also only one necessary, immutable truth, which carries in itself its own reason, and the reason for all that is. Every truth which is separated from this truth leads astray, rests on nothing, is changed to error. It is a son without a father, an effect without a cause, a ray which grows pale and is extinguished when it withdraws from its luminous center. Error is only truth out of place. Hence, it follows, that all truth is a mystery, since its final reason is concealed from our eyes in the bosom of the infinite essence. We have seen nothing to its depth until we comprehend that we cannot see the depth of anything. Repugnance to mysteries is an infallible symptom of short-sightedness.

† Mystery is a truth known and not comprehended: known in its existence, unknown in its essence.

supported by testimony. In proportion as facts multiply, their connection is developed under the influence of reflection; they explain each other; the luminous chain of truths is found, and intelligence succeeds to faith. Then we no longer say, I believe *that* is; but we say, I see *that* must be.

See the young man as he enters upon the study of science. Everything is a mystery to him. He advances into that obscure country, guided by the words of his master. He hears more than he sees. He registers in good faith the data that are furnished him. Insensibly the light appears; isolated, floating fragments of knowledge approach each other, unite and consolidate, and throw light upon each other. Reason supplants authority, and the shades of faith vanish before the light of intelligence.

Put an arrogant spirit in place of the docile scholar, who will only consent to walk in the full sunshine of evidence, and attempts to comprehend everything before knowing anything, he will never know or comprehend anything. To enter into the kingdom of truth, as to enter into the kingdom of Heaven (and both mean the same thing), we must become as little children.* Boasters cannot pass.

Such being the law of our intellectual development, is it not natural that God should conform Himself to it, in the plans which he proposes we should follow here below? While our mind is clogged by the weight of its organs, it cannot rise to the intuition of the sublime realities of the superior world, and the Divine Preceptor must needs initiate it by degrees into an order of knowledge whose immeasurable height the eye of an archangel itself could not reach.

The supernatural facts which the divine Word proposes to our belief, such as the existence of three divine persons, the union of the second among them with humanity, the death of the God-man for the salvation of all, the prodigious love he

* Matt. xviii. 3.

shows us in the Eucharist, &c.; these facts, incomprehensible as they are in themselves, are none the less magnificent glimpses of the Divine Being, an inexhaustible mine of knowledge and feeling. Penetrated by meditation, they offer to the mind an enrapturing image of the divine goodness, and excite in the heart the flames of love. God is no longer a terrible and mysterious sovereign, surrounded with thunder and lightning, whose greatness crushes our lowliness, whose justice terrifies our corruption. He is charity,* who, in the excess of his love, gave himself up to death for us. He is the ardent lover of our souls, who, in order to conduct us into the bosom of eternal joy, takes upon himself, with delight, the weight of our misery, and would share the sorrows of our pilgrimage.†

Penetrated by these burning truths, the human heart dilates, expands, rushes with ardor into the elevated path of evangelical precepts, and, going from virtue to virtue, she sighs for the moment, when, seeing God without a cloud, she can love him without restraint.

Deprive Christianity of this ardent faith, and reduce it to the beggarly elements of a philosophical religion, the divine alliance disappears, God retires into the depths of eternity, man remains groveling in the earth, given over to the narrowness of selfishness, to the brutality of his appetites, and to the sleep of indifference.

This is sufficient to explain that mystery lies in the conditions of our actual existence, and that in religion, even more than in science, comprehension is attained only through faith.

Let us now return to the profession of faith of the latitudinarians, and show that the extreme scantiness of its doctrines and morality are as contrary to the evangelical revelations as to the dictates of reason.

A glance at the New Testament is sufficient to convince

* 1 John iv. 8.

† Prov. viii. 31.

us that Christ and his apostles embraced in their teaching the most profound and varied questions. The first words of the Son of Man, at his entrance upon his earthly career, the first which his precursor John uttered upon the banks of the Jordan, the first also which came forth from the mouth of the apostles, is, *Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand* ;* a mysterious doctrine, which is necessarily allied to a vast dogmatic and moral theory. That this theory exists in the gospels and writings of the apostles, is as clear as the sunlight ; it is also a fact demonstrated both by the harmony of all christian societies concerning certain articles of faith, such as those set forth in the Apostles' Creed, and by their fierce contests in regard to other points.

What, indeed, was the object of all the great controversies which fill the annals of Christianity ? Simply to know if such a dogma, maintained by some, and denied by others, makes a part or not of the deposit of christian doctrines.

Constrained to abandon the untenable hypothesis of one single dogma taught by Christ, the latitudinarians retrench themselves in their old distinction of fundamental doctrines, which cannot be denied without denying Christianity, and doctrines not fundamental, which every one is free to believe or reject without ceasing to be a Christian ; and they place in this last class all religious creeds, except the divine mission of Christ.

There is, as we seen, a second hypothesis, serving as a basis for latitudinarianism. Let us examine it, and see if the faith of the Christian must be reduced to this singular formula : *I believe that God has sent his Son to men to teach them nothing.*

* Matth. iii. 2. iv. 17.—Act. Ap. ii. 38.

CHAPTER VII.

FALSENESS OF THE SECOND HYPOTHESIS.—DOCTRINAL INTOLERANCE OF CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES.

To change the Gospel into a collection of indifferent doctrines, of opinions accidentally expressed by the Divine Teacher, and without any intention of imposing them upon the belief of his disciples, is boldly to contradict Christ, the Apostles, and all christian ages; it is to offend reason.

The most striking trait of the character of Jesus Christ—that which most impressed the Jews, and which still shines forth on every page of the Gospel, is the tone of authority with which he teaches, and the obligation which he imposes on all to believe his doctrine.* Wonderfully condescending in everything else, he shows himself constantly inflexible on this point.

Convinced that his words will survive heaven and earth, he does not permit an iota to be taken from them; he excludes from the kingdom of heaven him who, by his words and his example, would dare to violate the least of his precepts.†

A vast multitude followed him, for several days, in the wilderness, eager for the words of grace and truth which fell from his mouth. Among these words there is one which astonishes and repels his auditors. What will the good shepherd do, who shrinks from nothing when a wandering sheep is to be brought back to the fold? Will he attempt an accommodation, will he soften by explanations what is judged *hard* and *insupportable*?‡ Far from it; he repeats five times the objectionable proposition, and always with an increasing energy of expression. The scandal infected his disciples. Jesus, without being moved by so general a defection, af-

* Matth. vii. 28. † Matth. v. 18. xxiv. 35. ‡ John vi. 53, 61.

firms anew what he has said. Remaining alone with the twelve Apostles, he wishes them to declare themselves, and, by the question which he addresses to them, he places them under the necessity of believing in the most incomprehensible of mysteries, or retiring.*

He demands of his disciples faith; but a faith which embraces all his teachings, which he commends and extols with complacency whenever he finds the opportunity, and which he prescribes as an indispensable condition of salvation. "Go," said he to his Apostles, at the moment of quitting them, "teach ye all nations, instructing them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you! He that believeth shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be condemned." †

This absolute authority of Christ in matters of doctrine, we find again in the Apostles. Depositories of the thought of their Master, and commissioned to establish it throughout the world, they also require that every contrary thought should be brought low, that every intellect should bend under the yoke of faith. ‡ If they are publicly scourged, or led from prison to prison, nothing is heard from their lips but prayers and benedictions for their persecutors; but if their doctrine is assailed, if presumptuous spirits venture to mingle their own conceptions with it, their zeal is kindled; they brand the innovators as ministers of the evil one, and strike with anathema whoever dares to pervert their teaching, be it an angel from Heaven.§

And what are the errors which they resist with so much force? they are often opinions in appearance inoffensive, but which by the leaven of novelty that they introduce into the human mind, would soon corrupt the purity of its faith.||

The Apostles inculcate on every occasion, upon the faithful and their teachers, a sacred respect for all truths uttered

* John vi. 68. † Matth. xxviii. 19, 20.—Mark xvi. 15, 16.

‡ II. Cor. x. 5.

§ Galat. i. 8.

|| Ibid. 9.

by the lips of Christ, whatever is their relative importance. "Keep that which is committed to thy trust," said they to the latter, "avoiding the profane novelties of words."* "Avoid them who corrupt the doctrine which you have learnt from Jesus Christ by our mouth . . . Do not say to him even, God speed you."†

Faithful to these principles, the Christians never imagined before the time of Jurieu, that among the doctrines confided by Christ to his Church, there could be any unimportant to salvation, and the obstinate denial of which would not imply the crime of infidelity. Whenever a new heresy arose, they did not examine whether the doctrine denied was or was not fundamental, but it was sufficient that it made part of the treasure of faith, and the innovators were separated from the society of the faithful.

"There is but one Lord, one faith." "Whoever refuses to hear the Church let him become a stranger like the infidel," such was the cry of all antiquity.

Nothing can be imagined then more opposed to Scripture and the general conscience of Christians, than that pretended liberty of admitting or rejecting a part of the doctrines and precepts of Christ. We will also show that nothing is more opposed to the principles of sound philosophy.

CHAPTER VIII.

NECESSITY OF DOCTRINAL INTOLERANCE.—ABSURDITY OF THE THIRD HYPOTHESIS.

As soon as reason, yielding to the torrent of light which drew the world to the foot of the cross, once said to the

* Tim. vi. 20.

† Rom. xvi. 17.—II. John, 10.

author of Christianity with Simon, son of Jonas: "Thou art truly the Christ, the Son of the living God; . . . thou hast the words of eternal life," there is an obligation for her to accept indiscriminately all the dogmas and all the precepts which emanated from that divine mouth. She cannot reject one of them under pretext of uncertainty or inutility, without assuming a superiority to God, without pretending to understand better than he the divine system, without casting on him the reproach no less absurd than impious, of ignorance, deception and trifling.

To wish that Christ had allowed man so monstrous a liberty, is to degrade immeasurably the divine character which we recognise in him, and assign to him so mean a part in the religious society that no man of sense and spirit would accept it in his own family. What latitudinarian would tolerate in his children the pretension of controlling his orders, and receiving or rejecting them according to their good pleasure!

Nothing then is more rational, or more logical than the doctrinal intolerance of Christ and the Apostles. It was inherent in their office as organs of the thought of the Most High. It was imposed upon them by the obligation to preserve that thought intact, and to transmit it pure from all human alloy to the farthest generations.

If these are unimportant doctrines, they are only so in the eyes of ignorance incapable of comprehending the scope of them. In fact there are none, and there can be none. There is such a relation among truths as well as among errors, that they permit no separation. Their intimate connexion renders them all fundamental. We must admit or reject them all, under pain of inconsistency.

Follow in its development one truth of the moral order, it will lead you, from deduction to deduction, to full and perfect truth, to Christianity.* For the same reason, every error, or

* Rom. x. 12.—I. Cor. xii. 13.—Galat. iii. 28.—Eccless. iii. 11.

the denial of any truth whatever, in the same order, leads inevitably, sooner or later to the last negation, atheism. We have the history of the human mind to prove that every heresy, except in case of a return to orthodoxy or a violent death, becomes extinguished in deism, and that pantheism is the end of every philosophic system, which has a flaw.

What is the consequence? that truth is safe and permanent only through its intolerance, and that it comes to an end the moment it capitulates with error. It follows that the religion of Christ, which is to survive the world, could not have survived its founder a century, if the christian community had not maintained between its innovator and itself the formidable barrier of anathema.

To these two motives for doctrinal intolerance let us add a third, not less decisive, the manifest aim of the Gospel revelation. What is this aim? it is visibly to re-unite the human family, separated from its beginning by error and deceit; it is to banish the human distinction of Jew and Roman, Greek and Barbarian, master and slave, great and small, and to convert all the children of men into children of God, members of the same body, animated by the same spirit, under one head, Christ; in one word to offer everywhere to the love of heaven and the admiration of the world, the wonderful spectacle of those first *believers, who had but one heart and one soul*.*

How can this blending of individuals and nations, this perfect harmony of mind and will, be effected without the influence of a uniform invariable belief, and without the abolition of thine and mine in matters of faith. He is ignorant of man and of history, who does not know that religious differences are of all others, the deepest and most irremediable, and are the most fruitful causes of animosity and disastrous outbreaks. It is without doubt the duty of Christian charity

* Act. Ap. iv. 32.

to cherish tenderly the person of him whose errors we detest; but does not this virtue, the fruit of the glowing inspiration of faith always wither under the icy breath of doubt, and in the blasting wind of controversy.

The union of all men in submission to the same truths, in the practice of the same duties, in the expectation of the same future is evidently the design of our Heavenly Father in the choice he has made of Christ to re-establish in unity all things that are in Heaven and in earth.*

Unity of thought and feeling, elevating itself in Christians to the perfection of Divine unity, is the most ardent desire of Christ, the object of his toils and death, the fruit which he promised himself from the institutions which he bequeathed to the world.†

Unity of faith and worship was the constant motto of the Apostles, and teachers, and of the faithful in all ages; this is the first want of society, so frequently upturned by religious dissensions; this is the universal wish; and yet there is not a single latitudinarian who would permit among his followers the divisions which he judges innocent in the Church of Christ.

What remains then to the advocates of toleration in defence of a system which offends reason as well as faith? Will they say that liberty of thought on religious subjects is the necessary result of an inability to know what is the pure scriptural christian doctrine? But if this inability existed, would it not imply in Christ a total want of wisdom and even of justice? How can it be reconciled with the obligation imposed upon all men to believe the Gospel and observe all the precepts of it, under penalty of being eternally cast off by God?

Could Christ, the founder of a religion which can have no other limits than those of the universe and of time, have neglected the very means of perpetuating the knowledge of

* Ephes. i. 10. † John xvii. 21 et seq.—II. Cor. x. 17.

it. A mediator of the eternal covenant which was to put man in possession of the celestial inheritance, could he leave him in ignorance of the conditions annexed to his salvation?

Can it be true, indeed, that the author of the New Testament died intestate?

CHAPTER IX.

RULE OF FAITH.—PROTESTANT RULE.—CATHOLIC RULE.

HAS Christ established a rule of faith, that is to say, an easy and sure means of perpetuating his doctrine and extending the certain knowledge of it to every well-disposed man? Yes, answer all Christians who are exempt from the evil of indifference.

What is this rule? It is the Bible and the Bible only, Protestants answer, with one voice. There alone is found the divine word pure from all profane alloy. Read the Bible in sincerity, and God himself will speak to you, according to the promise of the prophet: "They shall be all taught of God."* To listen to any other master is to rush into error; for it is written: "Every man is a liar."†

The Bible, answer the Catholics, and with them the Eastern schismatics, is certainly the principal source of christian faith; but it cannot be the only rule: for it does not contain all the teachings of Christ; and those which it does contain are not within the reach of all understandings. To be assured of possessing the christian doctrine in its completeness, it is necessary, first, to know the divine word orally committed to the disciples; secondly, to understand the Scripture in its true sense. Now Christ has provided for this double want, by the

* John vi. 45.

† Ps. cxv. 2.

establishment of a body of teachers, commanded to preach his religion throughout all the world, and protected from error by the promise which he has made to be with them all days, even to the end of time. To listen to them, is to listen to Christ himself;—in one word, to read the Bible attentively, and to hold as indisputable the sense which each one believes he finds in it, without regard to the manner in which others understand it, is, according to Protestants, the only means we have of knowing the true doctrine of Christ.

To regard this body of teachers as the guardian and infallible interpreter of the divine word, whether written or traditional, and to submit our minds to their teaching as to that of Jesus Christ himself—such is the rule of faith admitted at all times by the Catholics, and also by the schismatic churches of the East.

These are, as every one knows, the two fundamental principles, the one of Protestantism, the other of Catholicism. These principles, inasmuch as they are constituent and fundamental, necessarily lead to the triumph or the ruin of the doctrines which are attached to them, according as they are recognized to be true or false. If it is true that every one, by divine right, may be his own sole master in the interpretation of Scripture, it is evident that all the biblical interpretations hitherto made are irreproachable, however absurd and impious they may appear; for, to have a right to condemn them, it would be necessary to prove that their authors did not find in Scripture what they pretended to find there; but this is an interior, individual fact, for which they are responsible only to God and their own consciences.

If it is shown, on the contrary, that Christ has established a teaching church, and that he has invested it with an infallible authority, it is clear that all the doctrines of this church find in its infallibility a complete justification. “It is time entirely thrown away,” said an able Protestant minister, “to

discuss with this church its dogmas and its worship, since its dogmas and its worship are justified from the moment its authority is admitted." * "Let it be proved to me to-day," said Rousseau, "that, in matters of faith, I am obliged to submit to the decisions of some one, to-morrow I would become a Catholic, and every consistent and true man would follow my example." †

But these two principles are contradictory, and the truth of the one necessarily implies the falseness of the other. If Christ has not established any medium of communication between himself and man but the Bible, the authority which the Catholic Church assumes is manifestly a usurpation; but, if we recognize in this authority a divine establishment, Protestantism is indisputably rebellion against Christ.

It is sufficient to point out the high importance of this discussion, and to call the attention of the reader to the comparison we are about to make of these two principles, in the scriptural, moral, and historical point of view.

CHAPTER X.

THE PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE FINDS NOTHING WHICH DOES NOT CONDEMN IT IN THE BIBLE, AND IN THE HISTORY OF THE APOSTOLIC TIMES.

ARE the reading and individual interpretation of the Bible the means chosen by Christ to conduct men to the knowledge and practice of his religion?

This is a question of fact, to be resolved by the testimony of the sacred writers, since Protestants repel every other tes-

* *Thèses de M. J. E. Naville. Dissert. Prélim. ch. iv. Geneva, 1839.*

† *Lettres écrites de la Montagne, let. 2d.*

timony in matters of religion. Let them show us, then, the page of the New Testament, where Jesus Christ obliges or even invites men to read the Holy Scriptures, and to receive as divine the doctrine which each believes he finds there. For three centuries Protestantism has examined and ransacked the Bible, and this decisive page is yet to be found.

Containing no special or formal command, does the Gospel furnish us with any hints which betray in Christ and his Apostles the intention of writing and entrusting to a book the mission of converting the world? By no means. Always and everywhere Jesus teaches his doctrines orally; once only he is seen writing, and it is with his finger on the ground.* He orders his Apostles to preach his religion throughout the world—a ministry which is to finish with the world†—he nowhere orders them to write.

The Apostles commence their labors; their voice is heard from Judea to Spain and the Indies; everywhere they found churches, *confiding their doctrine to faithful men, who shall in their turn teach others.*‡

Only six of them wrote anything. St. Matthew, the first in time, did not take pen in hand, according to all appearance, until six years after the ascension of Jesus Christ. St. John, who closes the series of sacred writings, did not publish the Apocalypse, his gospel and letters, till the ten last years of the first century; that is, about forty years after the period when St. Paul wrote to the Romans: *Your faith is spoken of in the whole world.*§

If we examine these writings, we shall find nothing in their form or contents which indicates in the authors the design of changing the method of instruction previously pursued, and giving to the nations a popular and complete course of christian doctrine.

The manifest aim of the four Evangelists, in their abridged

* John viii. 6. † Matth. xxviii. 19. ‡ 2 Tim. ii. 2. § Rom. i. 8.

recital of the life of the Savior, is not only to give a precise form to his teachings, but to show, by the irresistible splendor of his miracles and the accomplishment of the ancient oracles, that the Son of Mary was the Messiah promised to the world, the eternal Son of the Most High. In what they relate of his doctrine, they are still historians. It is always Jesus who speaks; and these quotations, in general very short, are evidently detached fragments of much longer instructions.

The Epistles of the Apostles, addressed, some to particular churches, others to individuals, are evidently designed to adjust differences, to guard the faithful against rising heresies, to confirm them in the doctrine received from the mouth of the Apostles or from ministers ordained by them. They recall the oral teaching, and do not attribute to it less authority than to the written word.* They contain, indeed, magnificent dogmatical developments, but always relating to points of doctrine endangered by heresy. They nowhere give a regular and complete summary of what is necessary to be believed.

The moral part is more completely carried out; but it must be surprising to a Protestant, that, in their very frequent details of duties, the Apostles constantly omit the fundamental duty of reading and meditating on the Bible, the obligation so binding on fathers and mothers to put into the hands of their children this *only rule of faith and practice*.

The Greek language, employed by the writers of the New Testament,† was at that time, no doubt, very generally diffused; but it was not the language of the people. The *Acts of the Apostles* show us, among the first hearers of the Gospel, men of sixteen nations differing in language.‡ To

* 2 Thessal. ii. 15.

† Excepting, however, St. Matthew, who, according to the testimony of antiquity, must have written in the Hebrew or Syro-Chaldaic, but whose work was soon translated into Greek.

‡ Act. Ap. ii. 9, et seq.

make the first Christians assiduous readers of Scripture, it would have been necessary that the evangelical authors should have used the gift of tongues in writing as well as in preaching; or at least should have confided to skilful men the care of translating their writings into an endless variety of idioms. Unfortunately, history seems forward to show that the versions of the New Testament, in vulgar and barbarous tongues, were very rare, and appeared long after the apostolic times.* Hence, nothing is more probable than what St. Irenæus says, of a multitude of barbarous nations of his time, “who, deprived of the Scriptures, believed in Jesus Christ, preserving written, not on paper, but in their hearts, what concerns salvation, and guarding carefully the ancient tradition.”†

In the absence of translations of the Bible accessible to the common comprehension, let us add the extreme difficulty, not to say impossibility, of multiplying sufficiently copies of the sacred books, to render the reading of them common. I will not ask how every individual, but how every christian village could procure a Bible, at a time when the transcribing of a book so voluminous, demanded the greater part of a man’s life, and cost enormous sums of money!

According to the Protestant system, the art of printing would have been much more necessary to the Apostles than the gift of tongues. It was well for Luther that he did not come into the world until a century after the immortal discovery of Guttenberg. A hundred years earlier, his idea of directing two hundred and fifty millions of men to read the Bible would have been received by shouts of laughter, and would inevitably have caused his removal from the pulpit of Wittemberg to an hospital for the insane.

* The first translation, the existence of which is incontestable, is the Gothic one of Ulphilas, towards the middle of the 4th century.

† *Cont. Hæres.*, book iii. chap. iv.

CHAPTER XI.

WORTHLESSNESS OF PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE CITED IN SUPPORT OF PROTESTANT PRINCIPLES.—ITS TRUE ORIGIN.

How are the Protestants to destroy the unhappy effect which must be produced on every judicious mind by the silence of Christ concerning the obligation to read the Scriptures, and the negligence of the Apostles and of the first evangelical ministers to facilitate this reading among the faithful? They accumulate biblical passages, thinking that number will compensate for value.

They quote at first those words of Jesus Christ: "Search the Scriptures, for ye think ye have life everlasting in them; and the same are they that give testimony to me."* Search the Scriptures! Is not this a formal command? Let us allow that it is a command.† To whom was it addressed? To the Apostles, to the disciples of Jesus Christ? Evidently not; but to the Scribes and Pharisees, to the Jews and enemies of the Savior.

Search the Scriptures! What Scriptures? The New Testament, which did not exist, and which, had it existed, could prove nothing against men who were contesting the divine mission of Jesus? Certainly not. It applied only to the Old Testament.

Search the Scriptures, *for ye think ye have life everlasting in them.* . . . Do not these words contain a censure of the exaggerated and exclusive confidence which the doctors of

* John v. 39.

† Indeed nothing can be more uncertain. The Greek word rendered by *scrutamini*, stands for the indicative as well as the imperative, according to the acknowledgment of interpreters, and many of them translate it: *Ye search*, &c. (See the Commentaries on this passage.)

the law placed in their knowledge of the Scriptures, in which Protestants imitate, if they do not surpass them? And can this explanation be denied, when we find the Saviour adding immediately: "And ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life."*

What is in dispute between Jesus and his opposers, and why does he refer them to the testimony of Scripture? Is it for them to find a certain and complete knowledge of the divine law? Certainly not; but it concerns them to know if he is the liberator promised by Moses and the Prophets, and if the latter confirm his mission, which has already been authenticated by various miracles, and by the testimony of John the Baptist.† Indeed, there must be a strange confusion of mind to see in this a command for each individual to hear and read the Bible according to his own manner.

Let us imagine, contrary to the evidence of facts, that Jesus Christ did address these words to his disciples; they would still prove nothing in favor of the Protestant rule of faith. One illustration will make this plain to the least intelligent. Let a sovereign consulted by lawyers or others concerning legal questions provided for by the code, answer, "Search the code; you will find there the decision," would he intend by that to say: "I intend that each one should follow only these principles in matters of law and justice, which he shall adopt for himself, after reading the code, and from this time I overthrow all the tribunals, and deprive of authority the magistrates commissioned for the interpretation and application of the laws!!!"

But two of the apostles, Paul and Silas, arriving at Berea, find that the Christians of that city, eager for the word of the gospel, read the Scriptures every day, in order to assure themselves of their conformity to the doctrine of the apostles; and the latter, far from being offended by this pretention, re-

* John v. 40.

† Ibid. 33, 36, 45, 46.

joice at it.* This is the right of free examination granted to the faithful!

Let us admit the fact, except the two circumstances of the approbation of the apostles and of the Christianity of the Bereans. On reading the passage, it will be clearly seen, 1st, that neither Paul, nor Silas, nor Luke, who reports the fact, approves or condemns the conduct of the Bereans; 2dly, that the latter welcomed with interest what had been told them of the Christian religion; but that they were not yet Christians. The proof of this is in the following verse: *and many among them believed.*† Then what could be the object of the investigations of the Bereans? Did they attempt to compare all the points of apostolic doctrine with the text of the Gospels which were not yet written, or with the Old Testament, where this doctrine is not found, at least explicitly? It is evident that this examination related to the mission of Jesus Christ, and the realization in Him of the promises and oracles of the ancient law.

Let us grant to Protestants that the inhabitants of Berea were true Christians; what will they conclude from that? Could those who acknowledge the inspiration of the apostles and their doctrinal infallibility, be satisfied that the Bereans should doubt of the apostolic word, and that they should flatter themselves that they understood the Bible better than their masters in the faith? Would they pretend that Christ had permitted these simple believers the right to contradict those to whom he said: *Ye are the light of the world. . . . Go, teach. . . . He who hears you, hears me, &c.!*

If it is pretended that the Bereans only read the Scriptures to confirm themselves in the received faith, and to find arms against the opposers of the Gospel, there is nothing in it which establishes the right of free inquiry, and which the Catholic Church would disapprove.

* Act. Ap. xvii. 11.

† Act. Ap. v. 12.

Protestants are still less fortunate in the passage which they very frequently and very incompletely recite from the 2d Epistle to Timothy, chap. iii. verses 14, 15, 16, 17. 1st, The apostle there addresses, not the faithful, but Timothy ordained by him as bishop, and, consequently, obliged to study the sacred books; and what did he say to him? "But continue thou in those things which thou hast learned, and which have been committed to thee, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and because from thy infancy thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which *can* instruct thee to salvation, by the faith which is in Jesus Christ. All Scripture inspired by God is *profitable* to teach," &c. Here faith in the oral teaching of the apostles is evidently placed before the study of the Apostles, and recommended as necessary, while the last is commended as *profitable*. These *Holy Scriptures*, in which Timothy was instructed from infancy, are not certainly the Gospels, the last of which had not been written, and the first had been known only a short time. Hence these words of St. Paul are very far from the Protestant rule of faith.

A multitude of other texts are afterwards cited, most of them from the Old Testament, which were only praises of the law of the Lord, and an invitation to meditate upon it. We shall answer these things in detail as soon as Protestant commentators have demonstrated that they must be understood of the *evangelical law written, read, and interpreted by each individual*. Until they have done so, we may be permitted to say to our dear separated brethren: Do you know what you are doing, by saying incessantly, *In religion, the Bible, nothing but the Bible?* You pronounce your own condemnation; for this principle, the only one upon which you agree, is it not entirely unscriptural. From whence have you received it? Evidently from Dr. Martin Luther, who, seeing the Church universal rise and menace his propositions, saw that there was but one alternative, either to retract his theses and allow

that he was deceived, or arm himself with a Bible, and cry with all his might, as he did, "I have the Bible for myself; whoever reads the Bible may laugh at the Pope, at bishops, at councils, at universities, and all the dunces in their train."

CHAPTER XII. •

DIFFICULTIES OF THE PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE IN PRACTICE;
FIRST DIFFICULTY: EVERY PROTESTANT MUST MAKE
A BIBLE FOR HIMSELF.

AFTER having resolved the question of fact, let us examine the question of right.

Can the individual study of the Bible, with the difficulties it presents, ever guide a person to the certain knowledge of the doctrine of Christ?

The first difficulty which presents itself to the advocate of Bible-religion, is to know if there is a Bible, and the difficulty certainly is not a small one. Archimedes, who only required a lever and fulcrum to raise the world, finished by leaving it in its place, for want of a fulcrum and lever. It might happen, also, that the Lutheran or Calvinistic youth, who only needs a Bible to rise from natural to revealed religion, would remain all his life in the former, because he could not say from conviction: Here is indubitably the Bible!

How can the Protestant convince himself of the existence of a book divinely inspired, if, faithful to his principles, he isolates himself from present and past generations, and, casting on them a look of defiance and contempt, says: Men are all subject to error or deceit; in religion I must trust only myself!

Is it said that the Holy Spirit, promised to all the faithful,

reveals to men of sincerity the ineffable beauties of Scripture, and shows them that this book differs as much from the works of man as honey from vinegar, and light from darkness? The Protestant ministers have, in fact, formerly said this, but whether from respect for the third divine person, or for themselves and the public, I believe they have ceased to repeat it.

By seeing and hearing the pretty trifles in which their inspired men indulged themselves, they have learned that the gift of inspiration would only people Bicêtre and Bedlam, and they have wisely abandoned that powerful machine to the descendants of Muncer, Fox, Wesley, and Swedenborg.*

* Thomas Muncer was one of the principal leaders of the Anabaptists, those elder children of the evangelical liberty preached by Luther, and who filled with ruin and blood a part of Germany. George Fox, an English shoemaker, who died in 1690, was the founder of the Quakers. John Wesley, an English preacher, founded the Methodist sect, in 1729. A few years after, the Swedish Swedenborg introduced into the world the Swedenborgians, or *New-Jerusalemites*. These sects although so different in worship and faith, have yet this in common, that they take the inspirations of the spirit of God for the rule of faith and conduct. Let us look at some of the results of their intimate communication with the divinity. The Holy Spirit inspired the Anabaptists to put to death the wicked and only preserve the good; John of Leydon to marry eleven wives at once, and then put them to death; Hermann, to announce himself as the Messiah, and to massacre all the priests and magistrates; David Georges, to call himself the true Son of God, and preach a doctrine more perfect than that of the Bible; Nicolas, a disciple of Georges, to despise all faith, and to remain in sin that grace might abound; Venner, to recognize no other sovereign on earth than Jesus Christ; William Simpson, to go naked for three years; a Quakeress, to present herself naked in the public service at Whitehall; a third, to enter the hall of the English Parliament sword in hand, and kill all those whom he could reach; in short, the Holy Spirit informed Joanna Southcote, mother of the Joannites, not long since, that she was to give birth to the Messiah, and that she had the power of delivering passports to heaven to the number of one hundred and forty-four thousand; it taught, and still teaches, Richard Hill and other followers of Wesley, that adultery, homicide and incest, render men more

The neutrality of the Holy Spirit once admitted by a sincere Protestant, how can he be convinced of the authenticity, veracity, and divinity of the Scriptures, except by long and rigorous investigations?

The uniform and constant testimony of Christians of all ages, it is said, is sufficient to prevent doubt, and the authenticity of the Bible is no less incontestable than that of the works of Virgil and Cicero.

Uniform and constant testimony! but can the Protestant admit the infallibility of this testimony before having personally examined its value? If he does so, he recognizes the existence of an infallible christian tradition, serving as a basis to the edifice of his faith: and, after having received from it with confidence the divine book, how can he, without inconsistency, refuse to take it on trust from that book, and pretend to interpret it better for himself?

If, on the contrary, consistent with his principles, he sees in Christians of present and past times only men subject to the grossest errors, most of them accomplices of the long-continued abominations of the Church of Rome, suspected witnesses, who have no other claim upon his belief than their incapacity to deceive him, he cannot excuse himself from verifying for himself the uniformity and consistency of their testimony through all ages; he must prove to himself the worthlessness of the opposing testimony of the earlier innovators, who rejected, as a whole, or in part, the Old and New Testament, and introduced apocryphal Gospels. Moreover, as it is evident that the Bible is not a compact and homogeneous whole, but that it contains more than sixty distinct

holy on earth, and more happy in heaven; that the liberty which the Redeemer has acquired for us at the price of his blood, consists in boldly transgressing the commandments of God, &c. (See *Le Guide du Catéchumène Vaudois*, liv. iv. 3d entret., tom. ii. p. 92, &c. Milner *Excellence of the Catholic Religion*, vol. i. p. 38, &c.)

works, coming from the pen of nearly forty authors, distant from each other; as it is certain that there is not, in this collection, a single book, a single chapter or a verse, whose authenticity has not been, and may not be denied or called in question, by some of the learned biblists of the Reformation, the commentator must necessarily carry the torch of criticism through each of the thirteen hundred chapters and the thirty-four thousand verses of the Bible. He must then take up his abode for twenty-five or thirty years, at least, in our libraries; for, if he is permitted the privilege of availing himself of the labor of scholars on this subject, it is indispensable that he should read attentively all that has been hitherto written for and against the authenticity and integrity of the Sacred Books.

It is evident that it is no easy matter to obtain for oneself in religion the reputation of distinguished learning. We have as yet only mentioned the two least difficult questions, those of authenticity and veracity. That a book is by such an author, of such a time; that it is generally faithful in its statement of facts, are things easily established by testimony. But, how can the interior, impalpable fact of inspiration be verified? No one can prove it but the Holy Spirit, or the inspired person himself. As no one among Protestants, exempt from fanaticism, relies on the immediate and personal revelation of the Holy Scripture, there remains the testimony of the writers of the New Testament; but what testimony? If it is their written word, let them show us the passage in which the inspiration of every part of the New Testament is clearly affirmed. If this passage existed, and it does not, would it be any advantage?

"How can the Scriptures," asked an able controversialist, "prove their own inspiration? All their doctrinal authority depends on their inspiration. You must show that they are inspired, before you have a right to deduce from their testimony any point of doctrine whatever. If wishing to demon-

strate the inspiration of a book, you begin by assuming it, you fall into a begging of the question," &c.*

If the oral testimony of the apostles, received and transmitted by the christian community, is appealed to, then tradition comes up again with its claim of infallibility.

But we must stop. It is evident, that, before creating for himself a religion by the aid of the Bible, the Protestant must create for himself the Bible by the aid of reason. But this is a colossal undertaking, calculated to terrify the strongest spirit.

How can we at once close the mouth of the defender of Bible religion? It is sufficient to ask him this question: You are constantly quoting the Bible, but how do you know that there is a Bible?

CHAPTER XIII.

SECOND DIFFICULTY OF THE PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE.—EVERY PROTESTANT MUST READ THE BIBLE IN THE ORIGINAL.

LET us imagine that, by long and conscientious researches, our Protestant has arrived at the conviction that the Bible is a divine book, all the words of which have come from heaven. This is, without doubt, a great step; but more is to be done in order to arrive at a certain and complete knowledge of the divine doctrine!

He would shock reason, as well as the universal conscience of Christians, who should imagine that, to reign with Christ in heaven, it is sufficient to put the Bible under one's arm and say: "I consider everything in this book as unquestionable."

* Wiseman, *Conferences on the most important Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church*, vol. i. p. 132, &c.

What would then become of the important precept to read the Bible? If God himself condescends to dictate a book so voluminous, it must necessarily be acknowledged that he has great and precious truths to communicate to men. What other design could be attributed to him than that of rectifying and enlarging our thoughts, of purifying and ennobling our affections, and of harmonizing both with the divine intention and will?

The Bible, no doubt, contains truths and precepts more or less indispensable, but all infinitely useful and adapted to our wants. "I am the Lord thy God, that teaches thee profitable things;" such is the idea which naturally presents itself at sight of a Bible, even before having read these words.*

But can we penetrate into the *unfathomable abyss* of the divine mind?† What thread can we seize to direct us in the study of the infinite.

The first and most indispensable thing to a Protestant, for whom there is no sufficient guarantee of the fidelity of the translations of the Bible in the vulgar tongue, is the knowledge of the original texts; that is, of Greek and Hebrew.

It may be said: There are translations whose fidelity is universally recognized, and in this respect every one can depend on public opinion, especially on that of scholars. But here the infallibility denied to the universal Church is accorded freely to a translator, or at least to the public, a collection of ignorant and foolish men, whom the Popes have lead on from one abomination to another, and from idolatry to idolatry!

There are translations whose fidelity . . . which I would ask? the one which Luther made in German from the Hebrew? a version considered very imperfect, even by many of his friends, who were not entirely satisfied with his skill in Hebrew; a version which Zwingle accused of corrupting the

* Isai. xlvi. 17.

† *Judicia tua abyssus multa.* (Ps. ~~xxxv~~. 7.)

word of God; a version in which the brothers Valembourg have detected many essential alterations, and Einsler has discovered 1460 errors; a version now esteemed so obscure and imperfect, that the Lutheran consistories of Germany demanded a complete revision of it.*

Besides, what reliance does the work of a rash man merit, who struck off from the canon of the Scriptures any book which displeased him, and who, when convicted of perverting a text of St. Paul, answered: "I know that this word *only* is not found in the text of St. Paul; but if any one presses you upon this subject, say to him, Dr. Martin Luther has chosen that it should be so, and he says that a Papist and an ass are the same thing. . . . I am sorry that I have not added other words. On this account, the word *only* shall remain in my New Testament, even if the Papists lose their spiteful spirit concerning it."†

Does any one speak of the translations made by the other leaders of the Reformation, such as Calvin, Zwingle, Œcolampadus, Beza, Leon de Juda, &c., productions all more or less denied as soon as they appeared, and twenty times remodelled and revised, without being able to conciliate the general confidence.

If we appeal to the authority of the learned, where is the tribunal whose sentences are apparently guaranteed from error? If judges are needed to decide on religious questions, why reject those scholars and pontiffs, who, in the character of ambassadors of Christ, unite the authority of genius, science, and sanctity?

By learned men is doubtless meant our skilful Orientalists, Hebraists, and Hellenists, who have made a profound study of the primitive texts—find one who is satisfied with the ex-

* See Audin, *Vie de Luther*, ch. 18.

† *Opp. Luth.* vol. iii. p. 141, 144. Edit. Jen.

isting biblical versions, and who is not planning a new one which is to throw them all into the shade.

The only method, then, by which a Protestant can approach with confidence the interpretation of the sacred text, is, that he endeavors himself to become a profound linguist — a Gesenius or a Sylvester de Saey. Since he has already acquired a taste for study, by taking up his abode in libraries for twenty-five or thirty years, why should he refuse to sit on the benches of a school, to learn Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, and the thousand trifles indispensable to an accomplished commentator! He must make haste, however; for, after so much study, he might indeed be

De moyen âge *
Et tirant sur le grison.

Yet he is still a Christian only *in desire*, or *potentially*. Wo to him if death arrives before he has known and done what must be known and done to become really a Christian!

CHAPTER XIV.

THIRD DIFFICULTY: EVERY PROTESTANT IS BOUND TO READ
AND EXAMINE THE BIBLE IN ALL ITS PARTS.

Our neophyte is now provided with Greek and Hebrew, and furnished with all the instruments necessary to construct his edifice of Christianity from materials wholly biblical—where will he commence? By the attentive reading of the whole Bible, from the first verse of Genesis to the last of the Apocalypse. There, indeed, are to be found, though scattered and in a chaotic state, the numerous elements of Christianity.

* Of middle age
And bordering on gray hairs.

The sacred writers, as we have before observed, nowhere offer a synopsis, or regular and complete summary of what a Christian should believe and practice to secure his claim to the heavenly kingdom.

The Protestant, moreover, has not by his side, as the Catholic, an infallible guide, who points out to him the parts of Scripture which it is important for him to know, and those the ignorance of which is not an obstacle to salvation.

Can the symbolic books, the confessions of faith, and the catechisms which the Protestant finds in his sect, furnish him any assistance? Certainly not. What are they, according to the judgment of all enlightened Protestants? Poor, contemptible, wretched imitations of Papacy; formal abjurations of the fundamental principle of liberty of examination; or official protestations of Protestant churches against Protestantism.

Can the true Protestant have recourse to the ministry of the pastors of his sect? But, pray, who are these pastors? who has sent them? who has charged them to feed the flock of Christ? what spiritual nourishment can they offer to their pretended sheep, who can agree on nothing, and who wish that the faith *might never again be spoken of, in any way,** and who evidently could not establish among themselves a common formulary of faith, without signing the sentence of death upon Protestantism?

Let them assume the pompous title *ministers* and *teachers* of the *holy Gospel*, or the more modest, but less biblical one, of *ministers skilled in the interpretation of Scripture*†—what

* Words of the pastor Burnier, in his report to the assembly of Lausanne, 1833, on the state of the reformed churches of France. (See *Guide du Catéchumène Vaudois*, tom. i. p. 221.)

† In the work quoted above, vol. iii. p. 585, et seq., may be found some excellent remarks on the denomination *skilful ministers*, recently invented by a Genevese preacher, M. Pillet Johy.

are they in Protestant churches? Bible carriers, readers for wages of the divine book, and who, the reading finished, must close their lips, under pain of hearing even their wives and children exclaim: Be silent! who has given you the right to explain the Scriptures to us? It would be truly singular to see these persons exalt themselves into oracles, and substitute their ideas of a day for the teachings of a church accredited by eighteen centuries of existence, and by the submission of eight or ten thousand millions of Christians!

If the generality of men have need of skilful interpreters to enable them to understand the Scriptures, is it not plain that Jesus Christ must have established them, and that Catholicism must then come in, by full right, with its bishops and its priests? But let us return to our catechumen.

See him alone with his Bible, condemned to read it from one end to the other, to read it again, to meditate upon it, and compare it with itself as often as may be necessary to prevent any of the thirty-four thousand verses from escaping his examination: if he omits one, who could guarantee to him that the key of the true Christian system was not to be found in that?

A judge in the first and last appeal of the most important and complicated causes, a frightful responsibility rests upon him. How can he feel any assurance of the equity of his decision, if a conscientious study of the various parts of the vast process does not bring them all before his mind, does not enable him to appreciate them all at their just value, before he pronounces the sentence which will bring him to the happy abode prepared from the beginning for those who have known and accomplished the will of their Heavenly Father, or take him down to the eternal abyss destined for those who have broken the divine law!

Will our separated brethren allow me to ask them this question: Who among you can pretend to have read with

attention—I will not say examined—the whole Bible? You believe you are Christians, because you have glanced at some of its books; but, how do you know that so many pages, which are unknown to you, may contain nothing essential to Christianity?

CHAPTER XV.

FOURTH DIFFICULTY: EVERY PROTESTANT MUST ASSURE HIMSELF THAT HE HAS READ THE WHOLE BIBLE.

It is not enough to say, I have read all the Bible; we must be able to add, I am certain of having comprehended it sufficiently well. Is this an easy or common thing? What does Luther say on this subject?

“How great and difficult a thing is it to understand the Scriptures! Twenty years’ labor are required to understand the Georgics of Virgil; twenty years passed in the management of affairs to have a clear comprehension of the Epistles of Cicero; a hundred years with the prophets Elias, Elijah, John the Baptist, Christ, and his apostles, to have a glimpse into the Scriptures.” *

Can you, advocates of Bible religion, accuse me of extravagance when I demonstrated to you before, the obligation you were under to bury yourself thirty or forty years in the dust of libraries and universities, when the father of the Reformation condemns you to frequent, for a hundred years, the schools of masters not now to be found, in order to obtain a glimpse into the meaning of the Scriptures!

* Audin, *Vie de Luther*, tom. ii. p. 520. *Colloq. mens.* fol. 4, 290. M. Michelet repeats the same words, with some variation, as written by Luther, at Eisleben, two days before his death. (See *Memoires de Luther*, liv: v. ch. 7.)

I acknowledge that this may be some of the table-talk which poured from the lips of the evangelist, whenever the fumes of beer or of wine made the torch of the apostolic spirit flicker in his brain; yet, it is evident to all who have read the Scriptures, that nothing is more difficult than their interpretation.

I will not quote the words of the holy writers, nor those of the fathers of the Church, who have made the most progress in the study of sacred literature. All agree concerning the mysterious and incalculable depth of the holy books; all unite in saying that the hand of man will reach the stars suspended in the vault of heaven, before his mind can enter into the depths of the divine word.

I will say nothing of the high antiquity of the Scriptures; nothing of the vast variety of their subjects; nothing of the great distance between their authors, not so much on account of the years which separate us from them, as their customs, turn of mind, extremely figurative style, and the genius of their language; nothing of the immensity of the subject which they embrace—God, man, the universe; which considerations would be sufficient to manifest, however little, yet enough to enable the blind to see that the Bible is and must be the most difficult book to understand, and that the comprehension of the Roman laws, so laborious even to our most skillful jurists, is play in comparison to the interpretation of it.

I will oppose only two incontrovertible facts to the innumerable quotations with which we are deafened, to prove to us the assumed clearness of the Scriptures, and the facility with which they reveal themselves to those who are right-minded and desirous of the truth. One of these has been evident to all ages for three centuries, and the other is biblical.

1st. Since the commencement of the Reformation, there is no text of Scripture upon the meaning of which the generality of Protestants have been able constantly to agree. It is cer-

tain, then, that there is no passage which the generality of Protestants have understood in its true sense. It is a manifest proof that all, or almost all, misunderstand the Bible, since all explain it differently. They must, then, agree on one of these two things,—either that the Bible is very obscure, or that they themselves are not very clear-sighted.

2dly. In rectitude of mind, sanctity of life, and desire to know the truth; in one word, as to everything which constitutes intellectual and moral aptitude to comprehend the divine word, the Apostles were, without doubt, as gifted as most of the reformers. Who of the latter could say to Jesus Christ: *Behold, we have left all things, and followed thee.**

The Apostles had, still more, the immense advantage of seeing the divine Master, of hearing the language in which he preached, of interrogating him at will, to receive from his sacred lips the divine, animated, and living word. Yet, according to their avowal, *they comprehended nothing* even of what he told them most clearly; *it was hid from them;†* and after his resurrection, he was obliged to give them that understanding of the Scriptures that they had been unable to acquire by three years of assiduous attention to his teachings.‡

Now that every Protestant flatters himself that he comprehends the word, and the whole word of Jesus Christ, no longer spoken, animated, and explained, by the gesture, look, and accent of him who uttered it; but dead, buried in a strange tongue, and become the subject of interminable discussions

* Matth. xix. 27.

† Et ipsi nihil horum intellexerunt, et erat verbum istud absconditum ab eis. (Luke xviii. 34.) And of what had he spoken to them? of his consubstantiality with the Father? No, but of his passion, of his resurrection, and in terms the most intelligible. (Ib. 32, 33.)

‡ *Tunc aperuit illis sensum ut intelligerent Scripturas.* (Ib. 24, 45.) It is evident from the following verses that he referred only to the sense of the prophecies relative to his death and resurrection.

among the most learned interpreters, how can such a pretension be designated, how can the religious system be designated which establishes it as a principle!

CHAPTER XVI.

CAN THE PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE PRODUCE CHRISTIANS?

IN order to answer this question, it will only be necessary to repeat, in a few words, what we have before demonstrated.

No Protestant, faithful to the fundamental principle of the Reformation, can pretend to be a Christian before he has acquired, by his individual efforts, a firm conviction on five points.

1st. That the Bible is a divine book, and that it comes into his hands free from every important error which could have crept into it, through the evil intention or malice of its translators, copyists, or printers.

2d. That the Bible contains all that is necessary for faith and practice.

3d. That for the understanding of this book, it is the express command of Jesus Christ that every one should rely on his own judgment.

4th. That he has meditated and compared the thirty thousand and more verses of the Bible sufficiently to have possessed himself of their meaning.

5th. That he has omitted, in his profession of faith, no essential article of doctrine; that his system of morality includes all the precepts of rigorous obligation; that he understands all the sacraments, the dispositions they demand, the ministry clothed with the power to dispense them; and that, in a word, he knows the essential rites of worship.

And let us observe, that upon all these subjects our Bible Christian must have, not fluctuating opinions, nor any mode of thinking whatever, but an immoveable and assured belief, which will never abandon him, neither in presence of the opposing convictions of his rivals in biblical interpretation, nor before the funeral piles kindled by his persecutors.

I would now ask any conscientious man who has an idea of the vast range of biblical studies, if there is a mind in the world so comprehensive and bold as to undertake the solution of these five *postulates*, and if there is, in the nature of these questions, evidence enough to found a conviction unassailable by doubt, when the ear is closed to the imposing voice of tradition.

The most laborious life, and an intellect versed in all science, would not be adequate to such an undertaking; and yet this is the task imposed upon the humble artisan, the wretched day-laborer, and the poor mother of a family!

These good people will be compelled, by the aid of some fragments of Scripture, read to them by a minister on Sunday, and by the help of their own reason, which is confined within the narrow circle of a small household, with the assistance of that Spirit of God, which is so sparing in its communications, that it has failed Catholics for many centuries, and which never has made its actual appearance among the innumerable sects springing out of the Reformation, all armed with anathemas against each other—these good people will be compelled, I repeat, to project from their brain a complete religion!

They will be obliged to reconstruct the magnificent edifice of Christianity, which the most gifted genius cannot flatter himself he has beheld in its completeness.

They must comprehend the word of Jesus Christ better than the Apostles, after three years passed in the school of the Savior!

They must have a fixed and enlightened belief in regard to those very questions which have become the subject of interminable discussion among their most learned fellow-believers!

They must, above all things, avoid the abominable errors from which a hundred and sixty millions of their Catholic cotemporaries, and seven or eight hundred millions of their predecessors, have not been able to protect themselves.

Among all the absurdities put in circulation since the origin of the world, we should in vain seek for one that would exceed this!

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT MEN DOES THE PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE FORM? WHAT WOULD A CHRISTIAN BE ACCORDING TO ITS METHOD?

It is now very evident that no one can call himself a Christian *in virtue of Protestantism*. Every advocate of this system, if he would be consistent, will arrive by a longer or shorter way at deism, naturalism, indifferentism, or contempt of all revealed religion; at Christianity never.

Even if facts did not present themselves, with their irresistible authority; if the organs of the Protestant press did not agree in announcing the death of the reformed Christianity, and the impossibility of protecting any longer this lifeless body from the worms that are rapidly devouring it,*

* All these churches (the Protestant Churches of Germany, Switzerland, and France,) with few, I believe almost no exception, are corrupted in what constitutes the essence of Christianity. The gnawing worms of Socinianism and infidelity have, in their devouring activity, penetrated every part of the body, substance and even heart of these alien churches." (*Dublin Review*, quoted by *l'Université Catholique*, April, 1838.) As to the Anglican Church, the *British Review*, Au-

could the truth appear doubtful to any one who has the power of detecting in a principle, the consequences which it involves?

Let any one reject with contempt, as the reformers have done, all historical and traditional data in matters of faith; separate Christianity from the old and strong foundations upon which it rested when Luther arose; shut it up within the covers of the Bible, and allow the first simpleton who may present himself * the right to draw it from thence; in short, change the Christian Church into a true *Pandemonium*, where all dreams, all half truths, and all errors, can disport themselves at ease, and celebrate their Sabbath.† Let us, after this, find any judicious mind which can consent to see in this new confusion of tongues the work of him who is seated in the height of heaven.

Wherever men proclaim, in religion, the Bible, nothing but the Bible! they will soon boldly write, in face of the public: The Bible is nothing! *the Bible is a collection of miserable rhapsodies, of fabulous recitals; the New Testament contains the history and the doctrine of an imaginary being.‡ The Bible has had its day. . . . The Koran, in some respects, is nearer the truth than the Old and New Testament.*§

These are the men whom Protestantism produces whenever gust 1838, terms it a mummy, a *solemn corpse which can no longer walk, nor breathe, nor live*. A multitude of avowals of this kind are to be found in *Protestant Europe, the Archives of Christianity, le Nouvelliste Vaudois*, and other Protestant publications.

* This is the expression of Luther, in his *Letter to the Christians of Antwerp*: "There are almost as many creeds as heads. There is no simpleton who, if he happens to have a dream, does not believe himself visited by God, or become a prophet."

† *Archives of Christianity*, Jan. 12th, 1839.

‡ Strauss, *Life of Jesus*.

§ *Lettre à la vénérable Compagnie des Pasteurs*, &c. by l'ex-pasteur Rojour, p. 17, 19, 26.

it is permitted to take its course. This low class will number many scholars, many prophets in jackets and in petticoats; and, above them all, many scoffers and indifferent persons.

Is the radical incapacity of such a system to form Christians, after all, an evil? What would a Christian after this sort be? He would be an individual, who, devoid of all moral and religious principle which was not of his own creation, would commence his religious education by suspecting of imposture his parents, his friends, his ancestors, and the human race in general; and who, after longer or shorter preparation, would say with Luther: "Strong in my knowledge, there is neither emperor, nor king, nor devil, to whom I would yield; no, not even to the whole universe."* I do not imagine there is a father, a mother, a man, a woman, a master, or a monarch, so ill advised as to wish for such a son, daughter, wife, husband, servant or subject.

But I must add, this monster of impertinence, folly, and pride, does not and cannot exist.

CHAPTER XVIII.

APPLICATION OF THE PROTESTANT PRINCIPLE TO THE CONVERSION OF INFIDELS.—CIRCULATION OF THE BIBLE.—ITS RESULTS.

If the Bible alone cannot form Christians in Europe, where every one imbibes Christianity with his mother's milk, and breathes it in with the air, will it meet with more success in India, China, or Japan, in the Archipelagos of Oceanica, in the forests of America, in the midst of people, some proud of their so called civilization, and insatuated with the most absurd

Resp. ad Maled. Reg. Angl.

religious systems; others, fallen into the lowest degree of barbarism, and who must become men before becoming christians.

What method can the advocates of Biblical religion take to fulfil the great precept of Christ: *Go, and teach all nations?* They devote large sums levied on their credulous fellow-believers to the translation of the Bible, *by wretched scholars*,* into all necessary tongues; they print every year these translations in many millions of copies. They afterwards raise a levy from the working class, of blacksmiths, braziers, and other artizans out of employ, who, for an annual stipend, varying from six to eighteen thousand francs, according to the number of children they bring in their train, will consent to hawk about and disseminate the missionary book in all countries where the British flag floats.

Let us imagine one of these envoys of the Bible Society arriving in an Indian village, followed by two wagons loaded, one with his family, and the other with a full cargo of Bibles. What can he do in the midst of this population, whose language and habits are unknown to him, and whose prejudices and customs he will shock at first to such a degree as to cause him to be hooted at or murdered,† if it were not for the re-

* These are the words of the learned Dr. Percival, Chaplain to the King of England, in a document published May, 1837, under this title: "Reasons why I am not a member of the Bible Society." We read there: "It freezes the blood in the veins of a Christian to think, that there exists in the nineteenth century a society, which insolently sporting with the oracles of the all Powerful, dares to present to idolatrous nations as the divine word, the labors of miserable scholars, and shamefully swindles simple and too credulous men who maintain this society with their money."

† I shall here quote an anecdote of a Protestant missionary, who, finding himself thirsty in the midst of a warm address to some Hindoos, exhorting them to read the Bible, bethought himself of drawing from his pocket a flagon of liquor, and pouring it into his mouth. This incongruity put to flight the most delicate of his audience and threw the rest into fits of laughter

spect which the English artillery inspires, which these gentlemen have always the prudence to keep in sight in their apostolic and biblical excursions. But these good Hindoos cannot surmount their invincible repugnance to the costume of this stranger.* How, then, can he make them comprehend the necessity of reading the Bible?

Without doubt, the inquiry will be made, what this religion is which he announces. What will he answer? If he takes it upon himself to dogmatise, according to the particular views of his sect, he is at war, not with the Hindoos, but with all sects of different creeds, who also send Bible-carriers into India.

He is contradicted and anathematized, at the same time, by the evangelical and the unevangelical Lutheran, by the Episcopalian and the Presbyterian, by the Wesleyan Methodist and the Whitfieldian Methodist, by the Unitarian, the Universalist, the Independent, the Anabaptist, the Pedobaptist, the Antipedobaptist, the Freewell Baptist, the Six-principle Baptist, the Free Communion Baptist, the Quaker, the Moravian, the Rationalist, the Superrationalist, and the other representatives of the innumerable sects which multiply in the bosom of Protestantism. What will the adorers of Vishnou think of such a witches' Sabbath!

If, in conformity to his principles, the Bible missionary answers: The religion which I announce to you is all in this book.† Read it with the desire to learn, and you will soon

* Concerning the horror which the form of our garments and our shoes inspire in the Hindoos, and especially the animal materials of which they are composed, (See the learned work of M. l'Abbé Dubois: *Mœurs et Usages des Peuples de l'Inde.*, vol. i. p. 436.)

† In fact this is the only account which a protestant minister can give of Christianity, and a celebrated Anglican Bishop in the latter part of the last century, candidly acknowledged, not in a private interview, but in a pastoral to his clergy. Speaking of the christian doctrines he says: "I can more surely indicate to you *where they are found*,

know the true God, and the manner in which he would be served. Behold, then, all those poor Pagans, who do not know how to read, excluded from the kingdom of Heaven, and, as for the learned, how many of them are there who would consent to read through a large book, in order to find in it an unknown religion, and one which its apostles themselves cannot define!

We will suppose that curiosity may lead some to open the mysterious volume, and that the translation of it is as exact and intelligible as it is inaccurate and obscure, according to the account of the best judges on the subject.* What idea could the Indian, whose principles in philosophy, religion, morality, and literature, differ so singularly from ours, form of this book, and the religion it contains! In what estimation could he hold the patriarchs, Jesus Christ himself, and his Apostles, if he should see them drinking wine, sacrificing and eating sheep and oxen, when he holds in abomination intoxicating drinks, and regards the slaying of a cow as an unpardonable sin; who *would be less shocked to see human flesh*

than tell you *what they are*. They are contained in the Bible: and if, on reading this book, your sentiments concerning Christianity differ from those of your neighbors, be assured that infallibility belongs to you as little as to the Church." Address of Bishop Watson to his *Clergy*, 1795. (See Milner, *Excellence of the Catholic Religion*, vol. i. p. 15.) What is to be thought of a religion which its most learned ministers publicly declare they do not understand? What can be thought of those same ministers who have the assurance to teach to the world what they do not themselves comprehend! This is indeed absurdity carried out to its fullest extent.

* As to the theological and literary merit of these translations, the disinterestedness and address of those who make and distribute them, and to the fruit which infidels gather from them, some instructive and curious reflections and anecdotes, taken for the most part, from Protestant Journals, are to be found in the *Annals of the Propagation of the Faith*, vol. ii. p. 1, et seq., vol. iv. p. 174; et seq., vol. v. p. 685; vol. viii. p. 587.

eaten than a slice of beef,* and who would rather die than kill the vermin who were devouring him! If the Bible offers to the Indian these two enormities in its most sacred persons, nothing more would be wanting to complete in him the extreme contempt he feels for everything foreign.

It will be asked, what do these five thousand itinerant deputies, men as well as women, employed by the Bible societies, accomplish? They only promulgate contempt for the Gospel, "and their labors, according to the confession of their most judicious fellow-believers, instead of enlightening the heathen, are only adapted to strengthen their prejudices against the faith, if it should ever be announced to them in a more regular manner." †

If the number of christian natives, who amounted, eighty years since, to more than twelve hundred thousand in the peninsula of India, is now reduced to perhaps less than half that number, if the honest Indian regards a suggestion to embrace Christianity as a mere pleasantry, or a serious insult, ‡ it is owing to the presence of Europeans, and especially Protestant missionaries.

Of what avail, then, the thirty or forty millions which the Bible Societies expend annually in Bibles and Colporteurs? §

* M. Dubois, *Mœurs et Instit.*, vol. i. p. 430.

† Words of an English Journal, quoted by M. de Maistre, *Du Pape*, tom. ii. p. 17.

‡ *Mœurs et institutions des Peuples de l'Inde*, tom. i. p. 424.

§ The English journals announced, in 1835, that in the year 1834, alone the expenses of the Bible Society had increased to between five and six millions of dollars. In December, 1841, the *Missionary Register*, showed the receipts of the year, for the three United Kingdoms only, to amount to five millions, and the number of Bibles printed, to 3,237,244. Adding the collections made in other countries, Protestant or mixed, a total amount of nearly eight millions of dollars would be a low estimate. "If the money which this Society expends in Bibles had been given to the Pope to be devoted to Missions, it

"They serve," says the Prussian and Protestant naturalist, Meyen, "to enrich the hypocritical missionaries whom a grasping cupidity and devouring ambition have driven to these distant shores; men, besides, so imbecile, that many of them have not been able to gain a livelihood as simple workmen . . . Some of these modest personages have been able in two years, to amass a fortune of more than fifteen thousand crowns."*

They serve, too, to enrich the Chinese artizans who have discovered the secret of employing the Bibles to supply shoes for their countrymen.†

They serve, too, to divert our seamen by the spectacle of the islanders of Polynesia, "Sitting crouched upon the ground in a chapel, under the superintendence of a minister or his wife, frequently holding their Bible upside down, and endeavouring to imitate by a kind of muttering the sound of a child spelling."‡

We shall see elsewhere what becomes of these poor islanders, whenever the Methodist missionaries, aided by the power of the sabre, have imposed on them the reading of the Bible.

We have made it sufficiently evident that the idea of con- would have made more Christians than these Bibles have pages." —De Maistre, *Du Pape*, liv. iii. ch. 1.

* See *Annales de la Propag.*, tom. viii. p. 11.

† See the *Asiatic Journal* of London, for 1836, on the subject of two Bible missionaries sent to China: "After a voyage of two months and ten days, they returned to Canton, well satisfied with their expedition, for they had the happiness to land, in the different places which they visited, 20,000 Bibles. It is true, indeed, that this cargo of Bibles very soon passed into the cobblers' stalls of the country, where they were converted into thick paper suitable for Chinese slippers; it is well known that this took place recently in an enterprise of the same kind." —*Ami de la Religion*, May 12th, 1836.

‡ *British Review*, February, 1838.

verting to Christianity by the reading of the Bible, an idea absurd enough when Europe is concerned, is a ridiculous extravagance, when it is applied to the infidels of India or Oceanica.

CHAPTER XIX.

WHY HAVE THERE BEEN, AND WHY ARE THERE STILL
BELIEVERS IN THE BOSOM OF PROTESTANTISM.
CONCLUSION.

A QUESTION here presents itself. If Protestantism is really incompetent to make Christians, how does it happen that it contains Christians in faith and practice?

The mystery is easily explained. Those Christians are Protestant in name, but Catholics in fact, *destitute, however, of true Catholicity*. They are worthy people whose good sense has done justice to the fundamental principle of the reformation, and who seeing very clearly that they were incompetent to create for themselves a religion, judge it easier and safer to hold to the religion of their fathers, to a religion expressed in confessions of faith, books of religion, catechisms, and the preaching of their ministers.

They are souls of an incomparable docility, who believe on the word of ministers who do not believe or do not know what they ought to believe, ministers who unceremoniously place themselves in the seats from which they have driven the Catholic Pontiffs, and thence exercise over consciences an authority no Catholic ever conceded to Bishops, Popes, Councils, or even to the Apostles.

In fact, what was the power of the Apostles touching doctrine, according to Catholics? The power of revealing, not of inventing. What power do they recognise in Popes

Bishops and Councils? The power of preserving, transmitting, preaching, explaining, and defining, in case of difference, the doctrine of Jesus Christ and the Apostles, but never of changing or modifying it, of taking away from or adding one iota to it.

On the contrary, how is it with the Reformation? We see its leaders, lights and apostles, arrogating to themselves in matters of faith an authority more than divine; pruning, cur-tailing and denying what they have affirmed, affirming what they have denied, sporting insolently with the Sacred Books, changing confessions of faith as they would change their clothes, and causing their contemporary and disciple, Dudith, to say: "Our people are carried away by every wind of doctrine. If you know what their religion is to-day, you cannot tell what it will be to-morrow."*

Luther, after having crushed free-will, under the action of Divine foreknowledge, and made of man an automaton whom faith alone justifies and whose good works are so many crimes; after having taught that God works in us both good and evil, that he is no less the author of the treason of Judas than the conversion of St. Paul, that he condemns the innocent as he crowns the unworthy; Luther, after all that, directed his disciple Melancthon to re-establish in the Augsburg confession of faith, free-will and the merit of good works, and passed over in silence the cruel doctrine of pre-destination to evil. Afterwards Luther retracted his retraction.† He retained and defended the real presence in the Eucharist, notwithstanding *the great desire he had to deny it in order to injure the papacy*; and yet he promised a golden florin to Carlstadt if he would write on the other side. He

* Letter to Beza, Inter Epist. Bezæ.

† Bossuet, *Histoire des Variations*, etc., liv. ii.—Moehler, *Symbolisme*, book i. ch. 3.

denied transubstantiation as an impiety and a blasphemy, invented consubstantiation, declared both indifferent, returned to his first idea, then permitted transubstantiation to some churches of Italy.* Pressed by the reasoning of Satan, in the famous nocturnal conference, he abolished the mass as an infernal invention, then appeared disposed to re-establish it in order to sport with Carlstadt.† He suppressed, re-established and allowed, at will, the oblation, the elevation and the adoration in the Supper. He recognised three, then four sacraments, and ended by retaining only two. As to the Scriptures, he curtailed everything which troubled him, and added the word which he needed, treated the Epistle of St. James as *an epistle of straw*, the Book of Job as *a fable*, &c. and justified the whole by saying: "I, Martin Luther, as I choose, so I ordain; since my will takes the place of reason."

History shows us in other leaders of the Reformation, and their successors in the ministry of the Bible, the same licence in matters of doctrine, a wonderful fertility in constantly renewed professions of faith, a rare skill in deceiving each other, in cunningly changing doctrines and in trafficking in them, and in the attempts they made at different periods to disguise their divisions and give themselves the air of unity. England, subjected by the Reformation to the spiritual government of its male and female popes, in less than one hundred and fifty years found it necessary to change her religion eight times.‡

* *Histoire des Variations*, 76.

† Ibid., livre iii.

‡ An English publication (*The Catholic Miscellany*, June, 1826,) has the ingenious idea of giving to the picture of these eight religious transformations, the frame-work of the long life of the Englishman, Henry Jenkins, who, born in 1501, under Henry VII. did not die till 1670, under Charles II. One of the best saints of the Anglican Reformation, Cranmer, only lived sixty-five years, and yet he had time to change his religion seventeen times.—(Cobbett, *Letters on the Reformation*.)

Such were the men who succeeded in imposing their absurd vagaries for more than two centuries on fifty millions of men; such were the authors of those symbolic books which for a long time served as a rule of faith to various synods, among others to that of Dort, of so disgraceful and ridiculous memory. It was there that, just a century after Luther deriding the thunders of the Church had proclaimed the supremacy of each individual in matters of faith, that the representatives of the reformed Churches were seen armed with the spiritual sword, invoking even the secular arm against the unhappy *remonstrants*, to excommunicate them, and depose them with a unanimous voice, and why? because they refused to believe, on the word of the misanthropic reformer of Geneva, that God had resolved from all eternity to make Adam sin and to precipitate into hell a large majority of his descendants; that Jesus Christ had suffered death only for the benefit of a small number of elect; that grace was irresistible; sanctity inadmissible, and that the most abominable crimes were no obstacle to the salvation of any one who was justified by faith in Christ Jesus!*

It was by this solemn abjuration of liberty of opinion, by this shameless aping of the Catholic system, that Protestantism could resist the influence of the germ of incredulity that it bore in its bosom, and present to the unpractised eye an appearance of Christianity.

And since its writers and ministers, blushing at the absurd doctrines of their leaders, and the humiliating servitude which was imposed upon them, have thrown off the yoke of confessions of faith, and proclaimed individualism in religion, what do we see? Is the independence which these personages arrogate to themselves any advantage to the lambs of their flock? What have the Protestant people gained by this emancipation of their religious leaders, where habit or the

* See *Histoire des Variations*, liv. 14.

laws still retain them in a sort of belief? They have gained the singular advantage of believing in the doctrine of the ministers, who have no longer a doctrine, and who declare that they no longer wish to hear it spoken of, *in any way*. Here are ministers notoriously incredulous, who still employ the Papist weapons of *vow* and *excommunication* to retain twenty thousand dupes in a religion which no longer exists.* There is the Lutheran consistory of Stockholm, which, in a petition to the first tribunal of the kingdom, demands the application of the royal ordinances, carrying confiscation of property, *privation of all right to succession, and perpetual banishment*, against all Swedes who should take it upon themselves to understand the Bible, otherwise than Gustavus Vasa, founder of the Swedish Church.†

If there yet remains any vestige of christian faith in Protestant Churches, it is in those countries where a phantom of the priesthood has retained a shade of authority. There the people still believe, because they hear, *faith coming by hearing*.‡ Protestants have retained only that proportion of Christianity which they have preserved from Catholicism. Nowhere do they show themselves faithful to the principle of the Reformation, without becoming faithless to Jesus Christ.

It has now been sufficiently proved that the rule of Protes-

* The discovery of this extremely curious fact is due to the learned Prelate, who, by his *Recherches Historiques sur la véritable origine des Vaudois* (Paris, 1836), has just added a beautiful supplement to the invaluable *Histoire des Variations*. (See *Guide du Catechumene Vaudois*, &c., by Mgr. Charvaz, Bishop of Pignerol; Paris, 1840; Turin, 1843; tom. i. p. 42; tom. iii. p. 68.

† Most journalists have dated this valuable document of religious toleration in Sweden, Oct. 17, 1813. The criminal who was the object of the persecutions of the consistory, was M. J. D. Wilson, a distinguished artist, recently converted to Catholicism.

‡ *Fides ex auditer*. (Rom. x. 17.)

tant faith has no foundation in Scripture, in history, in the nature of Christianity, and of the human mind, since she has everything against her, even the conviction and conduct of her advocates. This demonstration will receive new light from what we are about to say touching the rule of Catholic faith.

CHAPTER XX.

CATHOLIC PRINCIPLE.—ITS IMMOVEABLE FOUNDATIONS IN THE GOSPEL.

Is the rule of Catholic faith founded on Scripture? Does the Bible prove that Jesus Christ has established pastors who must preach his doctrine with a sovereign authority, throughout all the world, till the end of time, and that he has protected them against all serious error in their teaching, by his perpetual presence in the midst of them?

In order to answer this question, it is not necessary to spend much time in turning over the leaves of the Gospels. Let us listen to the farewell words of the divine Master to his apostles. "Go, therefore, teach ye all nations; baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, behold, I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world."*

These words have no need of commentary, and all that the controversialists of the Reformation have invented to elude their force, only proves one thing—the commendable desire that Jesus did not say them, or that St. Matthew did not record them.†

* St. Matth. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

† The plan of this work excluding discussions of any length, the reader who wishes for more full Scriptural proof, in addition to that

Jesus Christ had previously said to these same disciples, whom he here ordered to preach and baptize, even to the consummation of the world: "Verily, I say to you, whatsoever ye shall bind upon earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose upon earth, shall be loosed also in heaven."*

The evening before his death, he had said to them: "I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you forever, The spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive; . . . The Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name. He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I have said to you. But when He, the Spirit of Truth, shall come, He will teach you all the truth."†

He had said of those to whom he sent them: "He that heareth you, heareth Me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth Me.‡ And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, going forth out of that house or city, shake off the dust from your feet. Verily, I say to you: it shall be less grievous for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha on the day of judgment, than for that city.§ He that believeth not shall be condemned."||

St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. iv., insists, in the first place, on the necessity of *preserving the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace*: "You are all one body and one spirit, as you are called in one hope of your calling. There is one Lord, one faith, and one baptism." He shows them afterwards the principle and foundation of that unity in

given in this chapter and the following, and also a detailed refutation of the objections of Protestantism, will find both in the works of our modern controversialists, particularly in the *Discourses on the Doctrines of the Catholic Church*, by Dr. Wiseman, dis. iii. iv. v. viii.; and in the *Guide du Catéchumène Vaudois*, tom. ii. liv. iv. entrel. viii. ix. x.; liv. v. entrel. i. ii. iii.

* Matth. xviii. 18. † John xiv. 16, 26.—xiv. 13. ‡ Luke x. 16

§ Matth. x. 14, 15

|| Mark xvi. 16.

the establishment which Jesus Christ has made “of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and doctors, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Jesus Christ.” How long will this ministry last? “Until we all meet into the unity of faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man;” that is to say, as long as there are men to be saved. And what is according to the apostle, the authority of these pastors and doctors? It is sufficient to take away all fear of error in following them. “That we be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the wickedness of men.”* The Apostle afterwards speaks of the intimate connection and hierarchical subordination of all the members of the body of the Church, a subject which he often treats in his epistles, particularly in his first to the Corinthians, chap. xii., and he adds: “This, then, I say, and testify in the Lord, that henceforward you walk not as also the Gentiles walk in the vanity of their mind?”

I invite our separated brethren to meditate on these two chapters, and ask themselves afterwards, with their hand upon their heart: “Where is the religious society which realizes the idea that St. Paul gives us of the mystical body of Jesus Christ, of that Church of the living God, which he elsewhere names *the pillar and ground of the truth*?”† Is it the Church which Luther found existing after fifteen centuries, and whose powerful organization resisted all his fury? or is it that confused multitude of Christians whom he excited to rebellion against her, and whom he delivered up *to every wind of doctrine, and to the vanity of their mind*, by telling them, in opposition to the express words of St. Paul: You are all apostles, prophets, doctors, and interpreters of the Scriptures?‡

* Ephes. iv. 4, 5, 11, 12, 13, 14.

† I. Tim. iii. 15.

‡ Numquid omnes apostoli? Numquid omnes prophetæ? Numquid omnes doctores? Numquid omnes interpretantur? (I. Cor. xii. 29, 30.)

The Bible, then, shows us the establishment of a body of pastors teaching, even to the end of time, the divine doctrine, with that infallible authority which the perpetual presence of Jesus Christ and the Spirit of Truth in the midst of them gives.

This would be sufficient for the Catholic. But could not the Bible afford a better-defined plan of the organization of his Church, and a more complete justification of the hierarchical system than he there finds.

CHAPTER XXI.

HARMONY OF THE CATHOLIC HIERARCHY WITH BIBLICAL PRINCIPLES.

“THE supreme power in the Church,” says the Council of Trent;* “the full power of supporting, ruling, and governing the universal Church,” says the Council of Florence, resides, by divine right, in the Pontiff of Rome, who, in quality of the successor of the blessed apostle Peter, is true vicar of Jesus Christ, visible Head of the whole Church, common Father and Doctor of all Christians.”†

To aid in this immense task, the Roman Pontiff has his venerable brethren in the episcopacy: they also being divinely appointed to the government of particular churches,‡ and called, according to the exigences of the case, to take part in the general government of the Church, in the general councils; yet, in subordination to the supreme Head, to whom alone it belongs to convoke them, to preside over them in person or by his legates, and to confirm their decrees.

* Sess. xiv. cap. vii.

† Labbe, *Collect.* tom. xviii. col. 526.

* Act. Ap. xx. 28.

Under the bishops are the priests, the deacons, and other ministers destined to aid them in the care of particular churches.

Such is the hierarchical chain which unites the simple believer, by the priest who directs him, to his bishop; by the bishop to the vicar of Jesus Christ; and who makes of a hundred and sixty millions of Catholics, according to the words of St. Paul, *one body, one spirit, having one Lord, one faith, one baptism*. Is this chain of divine formation, and do we find the links of it in Scripture?

Whenever the Divine Savior speaks of his Church, he employs expressions which imply the idea of unity: it is a kingdom, a city, a house, a flock—and he announces expressly his intention of uniting all those who believe in him, *in one fold, under one Shepherd*.*

Among the twelve disciples whom he chose to form his flock, and found his church, it is Peter whom he destined to replace himself, when he returned to his Father, as visible head of all the flock, and corner-stone of the mystic edifice.

God changed the name of Abraham, when, in recompense of his faith, he made him head of the old covenant, the depository of the promise of salvation, and father of numerous kings and nations.† Simon, Son of Jona, whose great faith obtained for him a similar but much higher mission, under the new covenant, received also from Jesus Christ a new name. “Thou art Simon son of Jona; thou shalt be called Cephas, which is, being interpreted, *Peter*.”‡

The divine Master soon revealed the mysterious significance of this name. “Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona: because flesh and blood hath not revealed it to thee, but my Father, who is in heaven. And I say to thee, that thou art Peter, and on this rock I will build My Church, and the gates

* John x. 16

† Genes. xvii. 5.

‡ John i. 42.

of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, it shall be bound also in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose upon earth, it shall be loosed also in heaven." *

Here we behold Peter chosen by the Divine Architect for the foundation of that Church which must be forever victorious over the attacks of hell. We see him possessed of the keys of the kingdom of Heaven, the symbol of sovereign power; invested with an infallible authority, since all his sentences are to receive the confirmation of Heaven.

And in order to make manifest that these magnificent prerogatives have been granted to Peter only, for the advantage of the whole Church, and for the support of his brethren in the deadly war which the enemy of salvation will wage against them, Jesus Christ has said elsewhere: "Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath sought you, to sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and thou being once converted (allusion to his approaching fall), confirm thy brethren." †

Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, addressing Peter, teaches us how he will realize the idea of *one flock and one shepherd*, when, being in the midst of his sheep only invisibly, he can no longer be their rallying point on earth. "Simon, son of John, lovest thou me more than these?" pointing to the other disciples. "Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee." "Feed my lambs." Jesus Christ twice repeats the question, and to the order twice given to feed the lambs, he adds another, to feed the sheep; that is, the whole flock.‡

To invalidate the proof which results from the passages above cited, in favor of the Papal supremacy, Protestant writers attempt to prove, either that Jesus Christ has granted nothing more to Peter than to his colleagues in the Apostle-

* Matth. xvi. 17, 18, 19.

† Luke xxii. 31, 38.

‡ John xxi 15, 16, 17.

ship, or that the prerogatives bestowed were personal, and must terminate with this Apostle. I shall only make two observations on this subject.

I. The gift which Jesus Christ granted to all the Apostles, collectively, of the power to loose and bind (Matt. xviii. 18), cannot annul the prerogative granted individually to Peter; and both are perfectly reconcileable in the minds of Catholics, who know that *Bishops have been placed by the Holy Ghost, to rule the Church of God*;* yet, in union with Peter, who was divinely commissioned to guide them also, and alone invested with the sovereign power represented by the keys.

II. To say that the prerogatives granted to Peter must end with him, is to say that this Church, to which Jesus Christ has promised eternal stability upon the rock where he has built it, must lose its foundation under Nero, and that, from hence deprived of him who was its strength, and who held the keys of it, it must become a ruined habitation, open to every passer-by; that is to say, that the pastors who succeeded the Apostles, without inheriting individually their doctrinal infallibility, would have less need than they of being strengthened in the faith by the presence and the voice of a chief who was inaccessible to error; in a word, it is to say, that, St. Peter once dead, the lambs of Christ, hitherto united in one flock, must be divided into as many flocks as there were Bishops, &c., &c.

I shall not undertake to demonstrate the succession of the Bishops of Rome to the spiritual supremacy, by the fact of the establishment of the See of St. Peter, at Rome, and of his death in that city. "The monuments still existing in this city," said a learned controversialist, "and the testimony of the writers of the first centuries, place this fact beyond the reach of doubt. Is it not sufficient to say that the authors, at the same time the most to be relied on for their erudition,

† Act. Ap. xx. 28.

and the most decided in their opposition to the Roman Church, have recognized this fact, and have maintained the authenticity of it?*

Among the moderns, no ecclesiastical writer of any value has contested this evidence.†

To find in the Bible the existence of the two last links of

* To Cave, Pearson, Usher, Young, and Blondel, quoted in a note by Dr. Wiseman, may be added Hammond, Grotius, Joseph Scaliger, Kipping, Bebel, Leclerc, Basnage, Isaac Newton, Dumoulin, Leibnitz, Casaubon, the Lutheran ecclesiastical historians of Magdeburg, &c. Has not Calvin himself, who at first denied the fact, said: *Propter scriptorum consensum, non pugno quin illic (Romæ) mortuus fuerit.* (Instit. lib. iv. cap. vi. 15.)

† Wiseman, *Discourses upon the Doctrines and Practices of the Catholic Church*, Disc. viii. Among the moderns *without value* who have denied this fact, I may be permitted to cite M. Bost, minister of the Holy Gospel, and author of the work entitled, *Du Pouvoir de Saint Pierre dans l'Eglise*, Geneve, 1833, reproduced with an ample addition of absurdities and violent outrages, under this title: *Appel à la Conscience de tous les Catholiques Romains, particulièrement adressé au Pape*, Genève, 1840. To M. Bost I will add Dr. Malan, *pasteur de l'Eglise du Temoignage, au Prê Beni, à Genève*, and author of the pamphlets: *Pourrais-je entrer jamais dans l'Eglise Romaine aussi longtemps que je croirai toute la Bible? Les droits divins du Protestantisme*, &c. *Le Prêtre et le Ministre*, &c. The last among the above-mentioned tracts, and innumerable others, which have given him the reputation of an Origen among the five hundred lambs of the Prê Beni, informs us that, among us, Catholics, *The Pope is the Lord God, the Lord and Creator of all things, the very great and good God, the sovereign God, who should be adored by all people*, that we grant him *the same authority as the Eternal over the crowns and lives of kings*, that we *reward whoever kills by poison or the sword, a prince whom the Pope does not recognize*, &c., &c. (*Droit divins du Protest.* p. 21, 22, 31.) He informs us, also, which is no less curious, that the Protestant Church numbered, in 1529, *5,500 years' duration*; for he proves that *God became a Protestant*, when, in Eden, he rose against Satan, who was evidently the first of the Popes. (Ibid. 36, 37, 50.)

When men, insensible to public contempt and the triumphant justice which most of their fellow-religionists have done to the historical

the hierarchical and catholic chain, we need only quote the words of St. Paul to Timothy: *Let the priests that rule well be esteemed worthy of double honor* ;* the order which he gives to Titus to *establish priests in the cities*, as he had already directed him ;† the institution of deacons,‡ and what the above named apostle says of their functions, and the qualities which they demand.§

Let us cast a glance over christian history, and see if it confirms the Biblical statements concerning the institution of a body of pastors, divinely assisted in the teaching of the doctrine and government of the Church.

CHAPTER XXII.

EXAGGERATED CONTEMPT OF THE REFORMERS FOR TRADITION.—FAITHLESSNESS OF THEIR HISTORIANS.—HISTORICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CATHOLICISM.

IF it were not a matter of historical notoriety that science and reason had no part in the establishment of Protestantism, and that the real foundation of the Reformation was, as the falsehoods and atrocious calumnies heaped up by the first reformers against the catholic Church and the Popes, do not fear to descend into the mire of the sixteenth century, to arm themselves there at all points, I shall take care not to follow them into this region. It would be doing an injury to the elevated minds and good hearts, of which Protestantism still contains many, to give any importance to the buzzing of the insects of a sect. The public, too, a more or less attentive spectator of religious conflicts, claims our consideration. However much it may be interested when it sees us opposed to loyal antagonists, its delicacy is wounded when it sees us fighting against vermin ; and the most complete victory over these animalculæ will not prevent it from telling you that such operations should be performed silently and in retirement.

* Tim. v. 17. † Tit. i. 5. ‡ Acts. Ap. vi. § I. Tim. iii. 8.

Protestant Hume observes, *the desire to steal the plate and ornaments of the altars,** it would be impossible to comprehend the great and complete rupture that was effected by it with the past.

To assume as a principle, as was then done, that the wonderful structure of Christianity, reared by the Son of God himself, after four thousand years of preparation, had been crushed instantaneously under the assaults of hell, notwithstanding the promises of the Divine Architect; that, in order to restore the Divine work, all that forty generations of Christians had hitherto believed and practised must be counted as nothing, and that a poor woman furnished with a Bible could accomplish more towards it than all the Bishops and doctors in the world, was without doubt an impiety supremely extravagant. It is easy to imagine that in the insanity of pride it should have presented itself to the mind of a Luther and of a Calvin, whose unheard of doctrines boldly assailed the faith of their contemporaries and of all antiquity; but that from their mouth this absurdity should have passed into the brain of fifty millions of men could not be explained except by the favor of princes, who were proud to subject to their power the domain of conscience, and increase their treasures by the spoils of the sanctuary, by the attraction offered to all the bad passions in the right granted to every one to construct for himself a religion, after his own fashion.

History of England, ch. xl. an. 1535.—We may add, still following the history, *the desire to give wives to princes who were disgusted with those that were legitimate* (Henry VIII.) *or who found that one was not sufficient*, (Philip of Hesse,) and to priests and monks who were weary of celibacy, (Luther, Ecclampadius, Bucer, Zwingli, Carlstadt, Ochin, Cranmer, &c.) Frederick the Great has still better said: “If the causes of the progress of the Reformation were reduced to simple principles, it would be seen that in Germany it was the work of interest; in England, that of love; and in France, that of novelty.”—(*Mémoires de Brandebourg*.)

Follies, however, convenient and lucrative they may be, have their season. The burning fever which Luther had communicated to a part of Europe, once calmed, all reflecting minds, who still esteemed religion a serious thing, were not slow to return from this insane contempt for christian traditions. It became evident that it was necessary to rank Christianity among chimeras, or acknowledge that Christ and his Apostles had left on the earth a christian society animated by their spirit and realising in its doctrine, discipline and constitution, the ideal of Christianity. It was plain, that for a right understanding of the Scriptures, it was better to listen to the Church of the Martyrs and of the Holy Fathers, than to the shoemakers, weavers, and blacksmiths whom the Reformation had transformed into interpreters.

The controversy could not be transferred to this ground, without an immense advantage to Catholicism. Antiquity showed it coming forth from the hands of the Apostles with its sacerdotal hierarchy, its dogmas, its practices and all its pretended *abominations* which had served as a pretext for the Reformation.* Hence among the Protestants most eminent in learning, such as Grotius, Leibnitz, &c., that homage offered to Pontifical supremacy, that regret for the fatal rupture made by the Reformers, and that tendency towards a reconciliation.† Hence those conversions, continually

* The celebrated English Bishop, Thomas Newton, avows with simplicity, *that the germs of Papacy were sowed in the times of the Apostles.* (See De Maistre, *Du Pape*, tom. ii. p. 262.) The deist, Gibbon, also acknowledges, “that a well informed man could not resist the weight of historical evidence which establishes that throughout the first four ages of the Church, the principal points of Papal doctrine were already admitted in theory and practice.”—(*Mémoires*, vol. i. ch. 1.)

† It would be easy to add a host of other illustrious names to those of Grotius and Leibnitz. (See Barruel, *Du Pape*.—Eslinger, *Apology for the Catholic Religion by Protestant Authors*.)

becoming more numerous, which rapidly thinned the higher ranks of protestantism.

Protestant ecclesiastical historians, as Basnage and Moshelm, have not failed to make great efforts to disprove antiquity and forcibly impose upon the Church of the first ages the democratic regime which they found in their sects. Even in our day a celebrated Protestant professor of history has been bold enough to write, with rare contempt of historical evidence, that "in the early times, christian society appears as a pure association of common faith and sentiments. No system of prescribed doctrine is found in it, no collection of rules or discipline, no body of magistrates It is not until later that magistrates appeared, who were called some *elders*, who have become priests; others, *inspectors*, who have become bishops; others, *deacons*.*

* M. Guizot, *Cours d'Histoire Moderne*, 1828, 2e leçon, pag. 25, 26. &c.—It is probable that the celebrated professor did not know, in 1828, of the existence of the New Testament; for with his well known acute perspicuity he would have understood that there was a monument to be consulted concerning the primitive organisation of christian society, and he would certainly have seen that *in the early ages, quite in the early ages, there were Bishops established by the Holy Spirit to govern the Church, and priests established by the Apostles to preside*, and deacons added by them to the priests and bishops. He would have seen by all that the Apostles (in particular St. Paul, in his letters to Timothy and Titus) say to the Bishops and the faithful concerning their reciprocal relations—that the relation of the first, with regard to the second, was as independent and imperative as it has been since. Joining to these data those which he would easily have found in the ecclesiastical writers of the earliest times, such as St. Clement, Pope, St. Ignatius and St. Polycarp in their letters, and Hermas in the book of *The Shepherd*, &c. &c., M. Guizot could have formed a just idea of the primitive constitution of the Church, and he would have spared himself the absurd fable of that Church passing from the state of pure association to the state of Presbyterian democracy, from this democracy to Episcopal aristocracy, and from this to Pontifical monarchy, a fable eagerly received by the Matters, Michelets and other collegiate

Happily, history is less flexible than the Bible in the hands of those who are interested to corrupt it. It would be easier to demolish the Alps than to efface from the annals of Christianity the profound traces which the Catholic hierarchy in every age has left there. Two English writers, celebrated for their antiquarian knowledge, Beveridge and Pearson, have joined the Catholic writers in destroying the fabrications of Basnage and Mosheim, and bringing to light the episcopal omnipotence of the ecclesiastical government in the time of the Apostles.

If at this remote epoch, the line of demarcation between the governors and governed is less prominent, if the union of the faithful to the pastors is closer, the reason lies evidently in the state of warfare which obliged the ranks to press closely without mingling, and in the fervor of the faithful and their application to divine things, which rendered them more worthy of being heard in religious matters and less subject to be absorbed by authority; for the latter only appears and raises its voice when the subject becomes headstrong and bewildered.

This last consideration has been developed by a skilful controversialist, who makes it very clearly seen, "that Bishops have not been elevated, but that the people have sunk; so

fabricators of history. But the following is the method of these gentlemen: upon the authority of their true grand-master Voltaire, they all start from this principle, that the Church is the work of priestly ambition, and setting aside historical monuments, which is a great abridgment of labor, they explain as best they can, the formation of this work of darkness. Innocent youth whom monopoly enchains around their chairs, receives with applause these conscientious historical summaries, and the *University Press* reproduces by thousands the *summaries* with the *applauses*. (See Guizot, 6e leçon, p. 23.) *Thus the world is filled and steeped in follies and falsehoods.* (Montaigne, *Essais*, 11, 12.)

that the former must necessarily appear more powerful and at a higher elevation than before.*

The pacific and undisputed manifestation of Pontifical and Episcopal authority at the commencement of the fourth century, when the state of the Church and the aggressions of great heresies rendered it possible and necessary, evidently shows that the divine institution of the authority of both was a universally recognised fact. If there had been the least doubt on this subject, the priest, Arius, and his numerous partisans, instead of agitating the world for more than a century, in order to gain to their party the Pontiff of Rome and his brethren in the episcopacy, would not have failed to reproach the latter with their recent origin and the unjust domination which they had arrogated to themselves in the Church.

But why insist more on a fact fully established by Catholic controversialists, and acknowledged by the majority of Protestant writers?†

Having examined the immoveable foundations of the Catholic principle in evangelical and christian history, let us examine its intimate relation to the general plan of Providence in the government of the world, the nature of religious truth, and the wants of man.

* Moehler, *Unity of the Church, or the Catholic principle according to the writings of the Fathers of the first three centuries*, Tübingen, 1825, book ii. ch. 1.

† See *l'Eglise Romaine reconnue toujours des Luthériens et des prétendus réformés pour vraie Eglise de Jésus Christ*, par le P. Bernard Meynier.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HARMONY OF THE CATHOLIC PRINCIPLE WITH THE GENERAL SYSTEM OF THE DIVINE GOVERNMENT.

Is it really credible, it is asked, that God, purposing to give a religion to the world, has entrusted it to a few men, and conferred on them the enormous privilege of infallibility, and obliged the human race to receive from their mouth the Divine gift of truth? Would it not have been more worthy of the common Father of men to communicate himself to all his children, and to enable every one, in a matter so important, to depend upon himself?

We will not notice the impropriety of thus boldly summoning God to an account, and the inconsistency into which these inquirers fall, when they propose to substitute innumerable individual revelations for one single revelation which they find it so difficult to believe, and when they are ready to recognise in every one the enormous prerogative of infallibility. It is that pride which ever says: "My God, I will obey; but before commanding, take my orders."

God, indeed, had the right to make religion a purely individual and direct relation between himself and man; but this would have really been an anomaly in his government. We need only open our eyes to see that the intervention of man between man and God everywhere takes place in the natural order. The most precious blessings are transmitted to us from heaven only through human hands.

Existence is the first of blessings. The power to give it, to draw a being from nothing, is, it would seem, a thing evidently divine and incommunicable. Yet this tremendous power God liberally communicates as we see. He has decreed that all men except the first, should acknowledge themselves indebted to their fellow men for life.

God requires that we should ask of him every day our daily bread, and the numerous necessities of life; but it is through the intervention of man that he grants our prayer.

It is God who governs society, and causes order, justice, and peace, to prevail in it; but, even here he avails himself of the interposition of man, and the sovereign justly claims a part of the gratitude with which these favors inspire us.

It is God who dispenses talents and knowledge; but the preceptor comes and pre-establishes his right of culture, and there is no genius who must not submit himself to instruction, and acknowledge himself the disciple of man.

If God accomplishes so many and so great things by man, in the natural order, why should he not do the same in the religious order, which is also natural?

The aim of Divine Providence, in establishing among men a hierarchical dependence, is evidently to bind them to each other, by the chain of gratitude and love, and thus to prepare them for the eternal tie which must unite them one day in the bosom of the heavenly Father.

Would a purely individual religion attain this end? or, rather, would it not be directly opposed to it, since its inevitable effect would be the isolation of minds and hearts? The religious tie, which can alone reach what is deepest and most active in us—thought and sentiment, was then much more necessary for the realization of the divine plan than the tie of flesh and blood and social interest. The latter, when it exists alone, can only form among men materials and ephemeral aggregations, differing little from those which exist among animals. Religion, by harmonizing the interest and will, forms one single human, that is to say, moral society.

I would recommend this point of view to men of reflection; and, if I do not mistake, the two following truths shining forth in all the clearness of evidence.

I. Religion, being essentially social, needs, as every society

a hierarchy of powers destined to maintain and propagate it; and religion cannot be a divine institution, if this hierarchy is not equally so, for God does nothing *by halves*. What man, then, could of himself command the thought of man? *

II. The Protestant principle, by making of religion a private affair between God and the individual, falsifies the divine system, introduces materialism into society, and takes from it its moral character.

If, leaving the material and political order, we cast our eye on the religious order in ancient times, we see primitive Christianity emerging from Eden, and advancing through the ages supported upon the Catholic principle of authority and tradition.

It is through the intervention of some holy patriarchs, alone honored with his communications, that God instructed the people, and he referred them constantly to the teaching of their

* The celebrated professor of history whom we have quoted above, has very clearly seen the *commencement* of this truth; and in a lecture in which he refutes, without naming him, one of his fellow-religionists, M. Benjamin Constant, *De la Religion considérée, &c.*), he demonstrates *that the religious sentiment is, not the complete expression of the religious nature of man, . . . that the religious society inevitably springs from the essential elements of religion, . . . that the necessity of authority, of a government is implied in the fact of the existence of this society, &c.* (See M. Guizot, *Cours d'Histoire Moderne*, leçon 5th. It may be asked, why, after having seen this, M. Guizot has not perceived the logically inevitable consequence of his principle: that all power necessary to the existence of a true and divine religion, is essentially divine and infallible; for, if it were not so, what would it be? It would be *the power* (legitimate, since it is necessary) *to lead men into error, with the obligation on their part* (all legitimate power compels) *to allow themselves to be deceived concerning the important subject of their eternal destiny.* This was too striking to escape so practised an eye; but . . . How many controversies would end, said Fenelon, if every one was compelled to say what he thinks!

fathers.* It is to two or three he entrusts his word, the spiritual food of *a thousand generations*.†

If ever a law existed, in connection with which writing played an important part, it was the law of Moses, whose least prescriptions were faithfully registered, and were, according to the command of the Lord, to be read every seven years in a general assembly of the people.‡ If there was ever a society which God governed immediately, and rendered himself present to each individual, it was the Jewish society. Yet, between the ark, which is his throne, and the people, he placed the tribe of Levi, alone charged with explaining and directing the execution of the written ceremonial law, and of transmitting with it the additional dogmas of which the written law was only the envelope.§

In difficult questions of a high order, whose decision transcended the power of the sacerdotal class, the Prophet, the *Seer* interposed, and his word, equally respected by the Pontiff and the people, removed doubt and preserved unity.||

The perfect harmony, then, between the Catholic principle and the general system of the Creator in the material and moral administration of the world, is manifest. As to the objections of pride against the *exorbitant* prerogative of infallibility, we shall answer them when we examine the Catholic principles and its opposite, in their connection with human dignity.

* Deuter. xxxii. 7.

† Verbi quod mandavit in mille generationes. (Ps. civ. 8.)

‡ Deuter. xxxi. 10, 11, 12.

§ On the existence of oral instruction and religious tradition among the Jews. See Wiseman, *Confer*. iii.

|| I. Machab. iv. 46.—ix. 25.—xiv. 43.

CHAPTER XXIV.

MYSTERIOUS CHARACTER OF TRUTH.—WEAKNESS OF THE INTELLECT.—NECESSITY FOR AN INFALLIBLE AUTHORITY.

TRUTH must be strangely dazzling and of a very deceitful aspect, since every man flatters himself that he sees it, and yet all see it differently.

Consult the seers of philosophy, not upon questions of a higher order, but on the elements of philosophy: ask them, for instance, what is truth, that wisdom whose heralds they assume to be; what are the true characteristics of its divine physiognomy, how can it be discriminated from its unseemly rival, error; they will all begin to discourse, in emulation of each other, and contradicting each other; and you will have reason to conclude that none of these personages has ever received the slightest glimpse of the beautiful unknown.

If only one question of this kind is needed to confound the most powerful intellects, how could these same intellects grasp and master religious questions! Powerless to define the simplest philosophic truth, would they be less incapable of embracing all divine truths! What can we think, then, of those who attribute to man, and even to all men, the power of judging in religious matters!—"They are madmen," said a man of genius, "whose folly resembles that of a child who strives to touch the heavens with his hand, or asks for the moon as a toy."*

I shall be told that it is not demanded to draw from heaven truths buried in the secrecy of the Divine thought but to discover in the Bible truths already revealed and brought to light; that there is a great difference between inventing a

* Words of Napoleon in a conversation with Gen. Bertrand upon the divinity of Jesus.

religious system, and finding in a book that system already complete; that in this last consists the task of the Protestant.

Let us imagine, contrary to what we have already seen, that the Bible positively contains all divine doctrines; in what condition do we find them? Which of the thirteen hundred chapters of the Bible presents a complete system of religion? What chapter announces in terms as clear and intelligible as our catechisms all things to be believed and practised? This chapter does not exist.

Doctrinal and moral truths are scattered and lie in confusion in the vast depths of the Sacred Books, as fishes and shells in the unfathomable caves of the ocean. We see them both appear and glitter on the surface; but who can discover their innumerable relations to each other in the abyss, and the immensely graduated series of which they are only imperceptible fractions?

Naturalists will have given us a complete Ichthyology, before the interpreter of the Bible, abandoned to his own powers, will be able to give us a dogmatic and moral theology, in which there is nothing excessive, and nothing wanting.

Every man who attempts to penetrate into the labyrinth of Scripture, without holding in his hand the thread of authority, will inevitably fall into heresy, that is, he will elevate a truth into a general axiom, will place the accessory before the principal, will change a counsel into a precept, and by this displacement alone, will transform the most admirable evangelical maxims into as many detestable errors.

We give up our understanding to the first idea that takes possession of it, and whatever refuses to follow in the train of this favorite is for us as if it were not. Do we not see this in heretics, those miserable half blind beings exclusively pre-occupied with one Biblical text and making absurd efforts to empty the ocean into a cockle shell?

It may be objected that it is not necessary to define religion

so precisely, that faith does not subtilise, but believes and adores, &c. Faith believes and adores! but in order not to believe blindly, it would seem needful to discern, in some manner, the object of belief; to adore without idolatry, we must know whether what we adore is God or the work of the imagination.

It is not necessary to define religion so exactly! It is religion, more than all things which must be defined, about which we must have just, fixed and precise ideas; for here voluntary ignorance is criminal, error may be dangerous, and doubt is sinful. Without definitions, how is the restless activity of the human mind to be checked which finds vagueness insupportable, and which, if it cannot repose in the bosom of truth, falls soon from lassitude into the arms of skepticism.

You who have destroyed the power of defining, by bestowing it on every one, cast your eye around you; what do you discover in your Churches without a head? here the yawning of stupid indifference, there the restlessness of men who are always seeking and never finding,* elsewhere the transports of blind fanaticism, no where the noble and peaceful attitude of the Christian who believes, adores, loves, hopes and defies the waves of doubt sustained by the immoveable anchor of faith.

To conclude. If the Bible is not destined to lead the world through interminable religious discussions into a decided contempt for all religion; if, on the contrary it is a divine code which is to elevate the mind and heart to the height of creative thought, and teach us how to move on according to the plan of the eternal legislator, nothing evidently is more necessary than an interpreter to organise the chaos of these laws, point out to us their essential elements, and relieve us from all fear of error in the application of them to our thoughts and actions.

* II. Tim. iii. 7.

But who is this interpreter. Where is the individual or collective being humanly capable of lifting the thick veil from the Scriptures, and compressing the Divine thought strongly enough to extract the essence of it without perverting it, and pour the substance of it into the narrowest brain? This is evidently a superhuman task.

Whoever admits that the Scripture is the work of the Spirit of God, must also admit that the Spirit of God alone can secure the right understanding of it, and to be consistent he must choose between these two systems: either to grant to every individual the gift of inspiration, like the Quakers, Swedenborgians and Methodists, and of course deify all the extravagances which can enter the human head; or recognise, with Catholics, the existence of a divinely assisted public magistrate who has the right to preface his decrees with: *It hath seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us.**

CHAPTER XXV.

ABSURD TASK WHICH PROTESTANTISM IMPOSES ON YOUTH. DISAVOWAL OF ITS THEORY IN PRACTICE, AND THE HOMAGE WHICH IT RENDERS TO THE CATHOLIC PRINCIPLE.

IF there is anything necessary for man on his entrance into the world, it is doubtless to find the world already complete and moving towards its end with more or less success. The newly born, would, indeed, be worthy of compassion, if falling into a society in ashes, he should be obliged to seek for himself a nurse, connect this nurse with a family, unite this family to society, and give this society an organisation.

* Act. Ap. xv. 28.

Very fortunately this case is unheard of. Man is born into the bosom of a family, of a society, and finds himself in relations previously established with his kind. He accepts without difficulty the existing order, and if he is led away by a desire to change it, it is only later, when the passions become clamorous under the restraint of duty.

But man is also a religious being: if he has necessary relations with his fellow men, he has no less essential ones with the Creator to whom he will one day be accountable for all the actions of his life. Who will teach him all these relations and instruct him how to maintain them? Would the same Providence which spares the child the pain of forming for himself a family and a society, impose on him the heavy task of constructing for himself a religion?

Could this chaos which we have imagined in the civil order, exist in the religious order; and should every dunce arrived at the age of reason be obliged to arrange it and by a creative *fiat*, extort from it a religious system for his own use, under pain of living and dying an atheist! Without doubt, if the principle of Protestants is adopted that there is no divinely organised religious community and that in religion every one must be his own father.

According to this hypothesis, every youth who has not yet attained to sufficient necessary maturity of thought and extent of Biblical knowledge to found a religion is, according to reason, freed from all religious belief and moral rule; he can be an idolater, deist, materialist, skeptic, atheist, everything except a Christian.

It may be said: The child should follow the religion of the father, until he is convinced that it is false. Upon what could this obligation be founded, I would ask, and how could it be reconciled with the principle of the Reformation? If it is acknowledged that there is a religion obligatory before all examination, either it must be acknowledged that a legi-

timate religious society exists, that is, a divine society, to which we are subjected by baptism, as we are subjected by the fact of birth to civil society, as is taught by Catholicism; or confess that God orders the child to adopt a false religion, which would be obviously absurd.

The child must follow the religion of the father! but, will the loyal Protestant impose on his child his own religion, allowing that he has one, with that absolute authority of the Catholic father, who, teaching nothing but the doctrines of the universal Church, can speak with the assurance of a pope or a council? If he does so, he deceives his child; and the latter, once enlightened, will see in the religion of his childhood only an unworthy artifice, and in his father only an impostor.

Does the father, on the contrary, admonish the child of the serious obligation which he is under to read the Bible, and construct for himself a religion? He can say to him nothing more than this: "My child, you must have a religion, if you would not sink beneath the brute: that religion God has vouchsafed to give us, it is here (showing him the Bible). He directs you to find it there; but, while you are making the necessary investigations in order to know what to determine on concerning your duties towards God, your parents, your fellow-men, and yourself, I give you a summary of the divine ordinances, such as I believe them to be: *Thou shalt worship one God, &c.*

"I exhort you, my child, to follow these rules of conduct, which you will afterwards find, I trust, entirely conformable to the divine word and to the light of reason. If I have deceived myself as to the nature of your obligations as a Christian, which is possible, as every man is subject to ignorance, I do not believe that you will have to answer for such an error before God or men."

What father would be willing to use such language! A

singular religion, which a father must conceal from his children under pain of abandoning them unrestrainedly to the corruption of their desires.

Let us imagine the child docile enough, meanwhile, to adopt the religious creed of the father. The time will come for transforming these prejudices into personal convictions, or rejecting them as the remains of papacy. At what epoch will this formidable task be undertaken? Probably between the age of fifteen and twenty; for the *interim* must heartily oppress a youth who comprehends the extreme importance of the religious question, and who feels how weak is a hypothetical opinion against the most violent assaults of the passions.

It is, then, in the most turbulent season of life that this infinitely complex and far-reaching question must be solved; the examination of which demands serenity of soul, and the absolute silence of the passions! It is at an age when no legislation recognises in man the necessary capacity for the administration of a family, much less for public affairs; it is at this age, I repeat, that he must comprehend, with perfect exactness, the innumerable and mysterious relations which connect man with his Creator and with his fellow-men, and, in one word, construct for himself a religion.

The color rises, and one can hardly control his feelings, in view of such frightful absurdities.

It must however, be confessed, that men are better than their systems. If there were found, in the 16th century, two beings insane and perverse enough to advance a principle destructive of all religion, all morality, all social order, history obliges us to acknowledge, that these same men availed themselves of all human power, including the executive, to prevent the immediate consequences of their principles, and to bring under their rod the people, whom they had released from the divine control of the Church. Experience shows us

the unfortunate victims of the Reformation practically abjuring the fundamental principle of it. Every Protestant father becomes a Catholic in the religious instruction he gives his family. Every minister is the pope among his flock. Every uncorrupted child trusts, with Catholic docility, to the words of his father and the minister.

Protestants, then, receive the fact, while Catholics acknowledge the fact and the principle of the absolute necessity that man, on his entrance into life, should find an established religion, and that he never should be under the necessity of reconstructing it. Both, consequently, demand the existence of the Catholic Church; for she alone can say to the child, to the youth, to the man, and to the aged: Believe with confidence my instructions; it is evident that I cannot deceive you unless God deceives you.

CHAPTER XXVI.

OBJECTION.—HOW THE CATHOLIC BELIEVES IN THE CHURCH.

THE existence of an infallible and divinely supported Church is a fact so notorious and so palpable, that it may reasonably be admitted before any examination. Can this fact have any other testimony than the word of Jesus Christ recorded in Scripture, and is it not upon this word that the Catholic Church founds her claim to the obedience of the faithful? But, if faith in Scripture logically precedes faith in the Church, is it not plain that the Catholic, as well as the Protestant, is obliged to acquire, by his personal efforts, a conviction of the authenticity and inspiration of the Scriptures? Is he not obliged to constitute himself judge of their true sense, at least in passages relative to the institution and

prerogatives of the Church? He must, then, be a sceptic for twenty or thirty years, and condemned to pass half his life in study (ch. 12, 13). If he receives the authority of the Scriptures on the faith of the Church, and believes afterwards in the Church, on the authority of the Scriptures, it is evident that he revolves in a vicious circle, and destroys every rational foundation of his faith.

I think I have here exposed, in all its power, the most specious objection of Protestants to the Catholic principle; an objection to which they are so much attached, that, notwithstanding the most decided answers a hundred times given, they are never weary of reproducing it with signs of triumph; yet a very sad triumph if it were real! for, what would follow if it were proved that no one could reasonably believe in the Gospel, if he did not first devote himself to impossible studies. It would follow that Christianity would be an odious absurdity, and that we should envy the Chinese the art of transforming into shoes the Bible and the numerous books which the Bible has produced.

Fortunately, it is not so; and the objection we have noticed will no more prevent the judicious Catholic from believing at all times in the Church, than the sophisms of Zeno against motion have prevented men from walking.

Let us follow the Catholic from the time of leaving his cradle until he enters, *full of days, into his eternal mansion*, and we shall see if, through this long career, he ever finds himself necessarily wanting in the faith of a believer, or the reason of a philosopher.

There is no difficulty during the first years. Having no thoughts of his own, and instinctively subject to domestic authority, the only thing which exists for him, the child necessarily adopts the religious notions which are presented to him, and every one knows the influence of first-received impressions.

To the very powerful action of external teaching is added the still more powerful interior influence of the Divine Master, who opens the mind and heart to the understanding and love of divine truths, at the same time that the human master introduces them by the ear. The Church, in fact, teaches, conformably to Scripture, that faith is a celestial gift, and that, in the baptismal regeneration, the Holy Spirit, uniting our soul to itself, produces in it a supernatural disposition to grasp and taste religious truths—a disposition which needs nothing for its development but external instruction. If the latter is conformable to the truth, as it is in the true Church, the divine influence of grace is combined with the human influence of language to lay the foundation of the faith of the child; and what chances of durability are there for an edifice raised by the united efforts of God and man!*

At the moment when passing out of the domestic circle, the child perceives that the universe is larger than his family, what does he see around him which is not adapted to confirm his first faith? Led to the house of God on holy days, he unites with the religious society. He sees the doctrine which he has received from his mother's mouth, descending from the pulpit upon an attentive and thoughtful people. The prayer that he repeats every day before the crucifix and the venerated image of Mary, he hears rising from innumerable lips towards heaven, in the midst of clouds of incense.

* It is well to remark here the great difference of religious education between the child born in the true church, and one who has the misfortune to be educated in heresy. The latter, innocent of the crime of his parents, whilst he is invincibly ignorant of their rebellion against the Church of Jesus Christ, receives without doubt in baptism the supernatural gift of faith; but the teaching of the parents offering to the intellect of the child only a corrupted doctrine, the divine influence is neutralized, God being incapable of seconding error. Hence religious instruction is only the work of man, and rests on the fragile foundation of *flesh and blood*.

What commands his attention most, in the temple, is the mysterious person of the priest, the spiritual father of the whole parish, and with whom he is about to form the most intimate relations, at catechism, where, during many years, he is to receive, with children of his own age, the milk of the divine word; or at the confessional, where he will reveal the most secret movements of his heart. It is to the priest that he is indebted, and he is reminded of it by the sight of the sacred font, for the sublime title of the child of God and the Church; it is from his sacred hand that he awaits the mysterious sacrament which is to unite him intimately to his Creator. Great is the influence of the pastor over his spiritual child. Napoleon, on his death-bed, confessed to his companions in exile, that the presence of the priest had always spoken to his heart. Here let every one recall the impressions of his early days.

But, to the eye of the young Catholic, the religious horizon extends, and gradually reveals itself with age. Around his parish other parishes are gathered, living under the same spiritual regime. The common father of priests and people, the Priest emphatically, the Bishop, appears in the midst of joyful chants. The words of the Pontiff confirm the uniform instructions of parents and priest. His sacred hand touches the young brow, and the union, before so close, of our youth with the mystical body of the Church, becomes still closer.

Beyond and above Bishops, universal veneration points out to him the Bishop of Bishops, the universal Pontiff, seated upon the immoveable chair of Peter, and forming of the hundred and sixty millions of Catholics, scattered throughout the world, one only body, animated with the same spirit, nourished with the same doctrine, moving towards the same end.

He sees, in the clear light of history, this vast society, which no visible hand has formed or supports, and for the destruction of which all the known forces of the physical and

moral order have conspired, surviving all human societies, resisting the most frightful tempests, and constantly bringing the immense majority of Christians into subjection to its laws, so unyielding to the passions of men.

Who are the enemies in every age rising up against the *House of the Living God*? He sees odious tyrants, the enemies of all restraint; proud dreamers, who pretend to substitute their thought of a day for the universal faith; sectarians without a past, without a future, with no tie to bind them to each other, but their common hatred against the Catholic society; and all confessing, by the name they bear, their descent from one man, and their religious illegitimacy.

What a powerful guarantee against the assaults of doubt is presented to the Catholic by this fact, which is as clear as the sun, and the evidence of which is more convincing every step we advance in the knowledge of the present and the past. He cannot refuse to believe in the Church without saying: In matters of religion, I see more clearly, I alone, than a hundred and sixty millions of my cotemporaries, and the eight or ten thousand millions of Catholics who have preceded me, all as interested as I am in knowing the truth, and most of them with better advantages for becoming acquainted with it!

The serious doubt of a Catholic can only be explained by great ignorance or great folly.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.—SECURITY OF THE CATHOLIC IN HIS FAITH.—PERPETUAL FLUCTUATIONS OF THE PROTESTANT.

WE have just seen the Catholic, whose religious instruction has followed the progress of his years, obliged, at all times,

to believe in the Church under pain of forfeiting his reason. Where is the vicious circle in which it was attempted just now to entangle him? *

It is the church, it will be answered, which obliges him to believe in the Church. Yes, as the sun enables him to see the sun. Would you wish him, then, to call in question the existence of that luminary, under pretext that it is the witness in its own cause? Such is the privilege of public and illustrious facts: they enter as conquerors into the intellect without passing through the obscure and bewildering defiles of reason. And for this reason, the supreme wisdom, which intends not that men should be restless disputants, *carried about by every wind of doctrine*, but peaceable possessors of the truth, *practising it in love*,† has founded religion upon facts.

It is easy to imagine that a man, educated in a religious society unfriendly to Rome, and nourished from his infancy with the most absurd prejudices, may have need of much study and reflection to convince himself of the divine institution of the Catholic Church, and to overthrow the framework of calumnies which deprives him, in history, of the sight of this wonderful edifice. But, for the Catholic, whom a solid instruction has fortified against the falsehoods of heresy (a condition which I always pre-suppose; for the sun itself is

* If we have recourse to Scripture in order to establish the authority of the Church, it is against heretics who deny this authority, but recognise that of Scripture. As to those who deny the authority of the Sacred Books; we do not seek to prove it to them by the authority of the Church which they do not acknowledge, but we employ against them the same kind of demonstrations that Protestants employ against unbelievers and Jews, the constant and unanimous testimony of the Christian world. The authority of Scripture once established, we deduce from it the existence and the prerogatives of the Church, which is entirely logical.

† Et jam non sinus parvuli fluctuantes, et circumferamur omni vento doctrinæ . . . Veritatem autem facientes in charitate. (Ephes. iv. 14, 15.)

without light for the blind), these facts are incontrovertible; and there is no mind so degraded that it cannot give the same reasons for its attachment to the Catholic Church, as the great Bishop of Hippo formerly gave. "If you wish to know," said he to his former fellow-believers, the Manicheans, "what attaches me to the Catholic Church, it is this: it is the unanimous submission of the people and the nations which she governs; it is the authority which she exercises, founded, without doubt, on miracles (for, if it *were not*, as he has said elsewhere, it would be the most astonishing of miracles), an authority strengthened by the hope and peace which she establishes in the soul—an authority propagated by charity, and cemented by a long prescription. What retains me in it, is the chain of pastors whom I see uninterruptedly succeeding each other in the see of Peter, from that apostle to whom our Lord, after his resurrection, confided the care of his sheep, even to the present Pontiff. Finally, what retains me in it, is the name itself of *Catholic*, so appropriate to this Church, in the midst of so many sects who envy it this name, that if a stranger asks where the Catholics assemble, no heretic will have the boldness to point to his own temple or house." *

To the irresistible influence which the external and palpable fact of the predominance of Catholicity exerts over every judicious mind, may be added an interior fact, not less calculated to confirm the Catholic in his submission to the Church.

This fact is, the consciousness which every sensible man has of his incapacity to construct for himself a religion which may support him at the hour of death; the need universally felt of reposing on religion, as in other important affairs, upon the sweet and soothing pillow of authority. Let us listen to one who had not a weak mind.

* Augustine, *Contra Ep. fund.*, cap. iv. Item., *De util. credendi*, cap. vii., xiv., xvii.

“The ignorant man has no need, either of books or reasoning, in order to find the true Church. The more ignorant he is, the more his ignorance shows him the absurdity of the sects who would institute him judge of what he is incompetent to examine. All the new sects say to him: Do not reason, do not decide; content yourself with being docile and humble: God has promised me his spirit to preserve you from error. Which should this ignorant person follow, those who demand impossibilities of him, or those who promise him what is in harmony with his incapacity and the goodness of God? Let us imagine a paralytic who wishes to leave his bed, because the house is on fire. He appeals to five men, who say to him: Rise, run, pierce the crowd, save yourself from the conflagration. At last, he finds a sixth man, who says to him: Depend on me, I will carry you in my arms. Will he trust to the five men, who advise him to do what he feels he cannot do? Will he not rather confide in him who alone promises him assistance proportioned to his weakness? He abandons himself, without reasoning, to this man, and only lies yielding and docile in his arms. Free yourself from an evidently impracticable discussion, cast off foolish presumption, and you will be a Catholic.”*

Thus, while everything within and without conspires to throw the reflecting Protestant into inextricable embarrassment, and condemns him to perpetual doubt on religious subjects, under pain of falling into absurdity,† everything, on the contrary, invites the Catholic to rest contented in the ample

* Fenelon, *Lettres sur l'Existence de Dieu, le Christianisme, et la véritable Eglise*, 3d part.

† The Protestant, who has a firm fixed belief in religion, must necessarily say: I have a conviction that I understand Christianity better than the Catholics of all ages, victims of the most lamentable errors, than all my fellow-believers, who, for three centuries, have agreed on nothing. What more would be necessary to make this poor man a proper subject for a bed and a physician?

bark of Peter, which steers prosperously towards the eternal port, through shoals and tempests, bearing within it the innumerable family of the children of obedience and charity.*

Alas! in the general shipwreck of intellect, misguided by Protestantism and incredulity, where shall we find the divine peace of the Savior, bequeathed by him to his disciples, if not in the vast ark of Catholicism?†

Every day we shall see approaching it in greater numbers, souls that are vigorous enough to escape the paralysis of an icy indifference, enlightened enough to despise the absurd mummary of Methodism, and strong enough to break the material ties which chain them to the standard of the Reformation.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

PARALLEL BETWEEN PROTESTANTS RETURNING TO CATHOLICISM AND CATHOLICS WHO BECOME PROTESTANTS. REMARKABLE FACT.

It has been said, that to judge of the two religious systems which have confronted each other for three centuries, it is sufficient to observe and listen to those who pass from one to the other.

Among the Protestants, who since the early times of the Reformation have returned to die in the religion of their *grandfathers*,‡ we find, particularly in our age, a host of

* Filii sapientiæ, Ecclesia justorum; et natio illorum, obedientia et dilectio. (Eccles. iii. 1.)

† John xiv. 27.

‡ A celebrated Protestant, Madame de Stael, hard pushed upon the religious question by a learned ecclesiastic, whom she herself had drawn into the subject, had recourse to this common defence: *I wish to live*

illustrious names, of superior men, whose irreproachable life, and noble use of the finest talents had won the esteem and affection of those around them, and the respect and admiration of the public. An exalted intellect, an honest and naturally religious heart, soon reveal to them the perfect nullity of a religion, which by the absence of doctrines and the meagerness of its worship, deprives the mind of its steadfastness, virtue of its foundation, and piety of its nourishment. Catholicism presents itself to them, often in the midst of studies which might appear foreign to the religious question. But, as we have said above, nothing is isolated in the intellectual and moral order, and truth, because it is objectively being, becomes necessarily the parent of all that is.

One, a celebrated professor of history, meets with Catholicism in the application of the principles of the science he is teaching;* another a profound civilian, discovers it in the fundamental laws of the social order;† a third perceives it in the midst of the frightful and eminently anti-Catholic scenes of the French revolution.‡ Some in their researches into the nature of the human mind, or the principles of political economy; others in their enlightened enthusiasm for the fine arts, have attained the conviction that Catholicism can alone answer to the moral wants of man, can establish by its pro-

and die, sir, in the religion of my fathers. And I, Madam, in the religion of my grandfathers, answered her witty opponent. This is, in other terms, the same answer that a French Ambassador made to some English Courtiers, who seeing him recovering from a dangerous malady, asked him if he should not have regretted being buried in heretical ground? “No,” answered he, I should only have ordered my grave to be dug a little deeper, and I should have found myself in the midst of Catholics.” To however slight a depth the Protestant penetrates either the soil or history, he meets everywhere the ineffaceable inscription: *Protestantism sprung up fifteen hundred years after Christianity.*

* Doctor Philips.

† M. Haller.

‡ Adam Müller.

found morality a basis for political economy, and that it exclusively possesses the principle of the beautiful in nature and art.*

The first gleam of light makes a lively impression upon souls desirous of the truth. The thorough investigation which the importance of the subject demands, the conscientious comparison of the two systems, viewed as to their origin, essential principles and results; the attentive reading of what their defenders have written most strongly for or against; in a word, all the means necessary to form a deep conviction, have been put in use.

On the other side, the very lively prejudices of early education, the kind of ignominy which the numerous and influential family of foolish persons attach to the change of religion, the repugnance which the severe morality and certain practices of Catholicism excite in human nature, but more than all, the terrible tempest that every converted Protestant draws down on his own and the heads of all belonging to him, the mortal blow that he strikes at the heart of relatives and friends, the tears of a wife, of children, whose brilliant prospects he often ruins; in a word, everything which to ordinary minds makes truth in the wrong, presents itself again and again to the thoughts of these men, and cruelly assails their heart.

At length, after long-continued resistance grace has triumphed. The divine remedies which the heavenly physician has entrusted to his Church have been applied to the neophytes, and immediately *a strength, a calmness and an inexpressible satisfaction* succeed to the weaknesses of nature, and to the tortures of doubt.†

The first desire of a soul that has found God is to publish

* De Soltberg, Frederic Schlegel, Veith, Molitor, Bautain, de Coux, 1e leçon d'écon polit.

† Words of M. de Haller, *Lettre à sa famille*, &c. Geneva, 1821, p. 20.

the greatness of the Divine compassion, and to invite all those who are dear to it to share its happiness. The new converts take the pen, and what do we find, in the writings in which they publish the causes of their conversion? an accent of truth and love which blind enthusiasm and wavering faith will never imitate. It is the language of a soul, which, long a prey to the weariness of doubt, reposes sweetly in the bosom of established truth, and does not fear to make the public a judge of the reasons for its profound conviction. It is the expression of a heart more filled with gratitude and love for the religion which it embraces, than aversion for that which it abandons, and which utters only words of kindness and charity even to the most unjust of its former fellow believers. I appeal to the general conscience, do we not find this the case in the numerous writings published by Protestants returned to the ancient religion, from those of the illustrious Count Stolberg, to the admirable *Letter* of M. de Haller *to his family*, and that of M. Laval, ci-devant minister, *to his old companions*.*

Let Protestantism now show us her conquests. We do not ask for illustrious names, for men who by their brilliancy of talent, and nobleness of character, might equal the Brunswicks, the Mecklembourg—Schwerins, the Saxe—Gothas, the Solms—Lanbachs, the Senfft—Pilsachs, Stolbergs, Eksteins, Hallers, Spencers, Schlegels, Werners, Mullers, Goerres,

* *Lettre de M. Laval*, formerly minister of Condé-sur-Noireau, à ses anciens coreligionnaires, Paris, 1822. I might add the almost daily publications of the members of the Anglican Church and of the University of Oxford, who have been returning in great numbers for some years past to Catholicism; which caused a very celebrated Scotch Review, (Blackwood's Edinburg Magazine,) not long since to announce, at the end of a long article on the progress of papacy, that *almost the entire press, at least in London, was in the hands of Roman Catholics*. (See M. Alfred Nettement, *Introduit. aux Confer. du Dr. Wiseman sur l'Eglise*, vol. i. p. 71.)

Schlossers, Hurters, &c., evidently there are none of these.* Let her show us at least some honest and virtuous persons who have left our ranks, urged by the necessity of a better faith and a better practice, and who have edified their new fellow-worshippers by the spectacle of an eminently christian life. We defy her to produce one.

Who, then, are the proselytes of Protestantism, since she sometimes makes them or finds them ready made? They are almost always individuals whose change of religion leads them to hope for a change of fortune, or whose embittered hearts would seek revenge in calumny. Here and there are a few priests and members of religious orders, who having exhausted the patience of their Bishops and Superiors throw into the hands of strangers the ball of suspension or interdict.

Some of these men have published *the reasons for their conversion*: do we find in their writings anything which the least severe police would not feel obliged to seize as an outrage upon morality?† We always find in them a man, into

* I will only give as a proof of this fact the extraordinary mistake of the Genevan who, in 1821, wishing to neutralise the lively sensation caused by the return of M. de Haller to the Church, attempted to make a dead person speak, in a “*Réponse à M. de Haller*, on the subject of his change of religion, *par feu M. de Langalerie*, Geneve, 1821.” To oppose to the learned and excellent *restorer of political science*, an arrogant, ambitious military man, ignorant of religion, condemned to death in his own country, and who after disgracing himself in all the Courts of Europe, died a professed Turk in a Hungarian prison, was in fact confessing an extreme dearth of proselytes; and here poverty is really a vice.

† At the moment when I am writing this, the journals announce the apostacy of a priest of the diocese of Pamiers, named Maurette, and the seizure of a pamphlet by the public ministry, entitled: *Le Pape et l'Evangile*, or *Encore des adieux à Rome*. The same journals announce the departure of M. Maurette for Canada, *in the capacity of a Protestant minister*. (See *l'Ami de la Religion*, April 4th, 1844.) How prompt are these people in the ordination of their ministers!

whose hands a Bible has very fortunately fallen, beginning to read it secretly (for according to these accounts it is a prohibited article of traffic among Catholics.) He finds in it neither transubstantiation, auricular confession, purgatory, nor the worship of saints and images, nor the adoration of the Pope, nor the celibacy of the priesthood, nor religious vows, nor fasting, abstinence, nor fifty other superstitions of the same kind. He then, perhaps, consults a Catholic priest; but the latter requires him in the first place to deliver up the Bible, and preaches absolute submission to Romish traditions under pain of eternal flames. Indignant at finding the word of man preferred to the word of God, the neophyte makes haste to cast off the dust of his feet, and quit the Romish Babylon.

Let us admit the truth of this fact, what follows? Here is a man who tells us that he no longer believes in the Catholic doctrine; but what doctrine does he put in its place? He does not say. He tells us that he cordially detests the Pope, Bishops and Priests, and that he joyfully leaves the Church of anti-Christ; but what is the charm which attracts him towards Protestantism, and which among the innumerable sects that are swarming in it, is about to console him, by the purity of its worship, for the loss of Roman abominations. He does not say.

He says that he abjures confession, fasting, abstinence, celibacy, religious vows, &c., but to what practices will he confine himself, in order better to conform to a Gospel which only preaches renunciation and mortification? Concerning this he preserves silence. He is evidently a Christian whose

Moreover, if the essence of Protestantism consists in opposition to Catholicity, or as a distinguished minister has said, M. Vinet, *in an irreconcilable hatred to authority.* (See *Guide du Catechumène Vaudois*, tom. iii. p. 276,) to whom, better than to a bad priest, could the care of propagating such a religion be confided!

faith has met with a discomfiture, and who wishes for morality at a discount.

If it is a priest or an unfrocked religious who holds the pen, he will be more frank. Amid many insults and calumnies against those who have driven him from their ranks he will quote Buffon on *the impossible rule of celibacy*; and will confess that the noble and august image of woman, that master-piece of the Creator, that complement of the imperfect portion of man . . . has charmed and attracted him.* In short, it is the old comedy of the sixteenth century, which invariably ends in marriage, and the living Bible which has convicted Rome of error, is always a woman.

It is evident that Catholicism well understands the art of forming thorough Christians, while Protestantism can only unmake them.

I will conclude with a fact of public notoriety, the consideration of which has moved many Protestant consciences. *There are very few of our Catholic priests, however limited may be their ministry, who are not often called to receive into the Catholic Church, dying Protestants, whilst it would be impossible for me to cite a single example of a Catholic desiring to die in any other communion than his own.*†

* May I be excused for quoting the *Adieux à Rome*, of the ex-priest and soldier Bruitte, p. 92, 94? It is just to observe that this vile pamphlet has obtained at Geneva as elsewhere, only the contempt which must be excited for it in any honest mind. It could find favor only with the sheep of the Pré. Béni.

† Milner, *Excellence of the Catholic Religion*, vol. i. page 105. This fact which has contributed to the conversion of many distinguished Englishmen, is one of the *Fifty reasons which induced Antoine Ulric, Duke of Brunswick, to embrace the Catholic Religion*, a work which made a great sensation in Germany in the beginning of the last century.

CHAPTER XXIX.

APPLICATION OF THE CATHOLIC PRINCIPLE TO THE CONVERSION OF INFIDELS.—SOUTH SEA MISSIONS.

LET us now follow Catholicism into Pagan countries in pursuance of the mission which was given it, eighteen hundred years ago, to announce and teach the practice of the Gospel to every creature.

Its means of action are still just what they were when it came forth from the upper chamber to the conquest of the world, most feeble in the eyes of human wisdom and ill proportioned to the magnitude of the enterprise. It is always *nothingness* which in the hands of the Most High, produces prodigies, *that no flesh should glory in his sight*.*

Instead of the five thousand agents whom the Bible Societies show us with pride, escorted by women and children, and receiving every year thirty or forty millions of francs either in Bibles or in salaries,† what do we see? a few priests, a

* I. Cor. i. 29.

† In 1830, the Catholic Church only numbered four hundred Missionaries in heathen countries, and the receipts of *The Association for the Propagation of the Faith* did not exceed 300,000 francs, (\$60,000) whilst the equipment of the Bible Missions was 5,242 individuals, and the annual expenditure exceeded 20,000,000 of francs. So that a Protestant publication (The Evangelical Magazine) exclaims: "Romish Church! now come and boast to us of thy Apostolic labors, and tell us if, even in the palmiest days of thy long existence, thou hadst phalanxes so numerous and well disciplined to oppose to the great enemy of the salvation of the human race?" (See *Annals of the Association*, vol. iv. page 184.) No, gentlemen of The Evangelical Magazine, the Roman Church is not so rich, and it is unfortunate; for with 5,242 Missionaries and an income of 20,000,000 of francs, she would soon have converted the world. But tell us why, with your phalanxes so numerous and so well paid, you have not been able to do what one of

few religious embarking at Havre, Brest or elsewhere, bidding an eternal adieu to their family, to their friends and to Europe. They carried with them a Bible, a breviary, the indispensable articles for worship, and some pictures. The poverty of those who sent them obliged them to calculate exactly the expenses of the expedition, and having arrived at the termination of it, they expended every year the sum of six or seven hundred francs. Instead of establishing themselves, like the Bible Missionaries, between a fort and an English factory, which insures safety, they landed on a savage, inhospitable shore, dreaded by mariners. The captain and the crew, whose affection these apostolic men had won, exclaimed at their rashness and departed with tears in their eyes.

Thus landed, in the month of August, 1834, at the Isles of Gambier, two priests and a catechist of the Society of Picpus; in the same manner, three years later, the priests of the Society of Mary established themselves at the Wallis Isles, and at that Futuna famous in the annals of cannibalism.*

The Missionaries advanced towards the royal hut, a frightful slaughter-house, where streams of human blood had just our Missionaries alone has done the Jesuit Father, Jean de Brito, who, a martyr at forty-five years of age had converted nearly a hundred thousand heathen at Madura and among the Maravas. (See Bérault Bercastel, *Histoire Ecclés.*, tom. xii. an. 1692.—*Lettres Edifiantes et Curieuses*, tom. x.)

* According to documents taken down from the mouth of the natives themselves, the number of the Inhabitants of the two islands (Futuna and Arofi,) commonly designated in French charts by the name of Alloufatou, not long since exceeded four thousand; at present it does not exceed eight hundred, and it is in a great measure the tooth of the survivors which has caused this great diminution. Not more than twenty years since, the rage for human flesh was so excessive, that wars were not sufficient to supply the hideous banquet, the inhabitants hunted each other even in their own tribe: men, women, children, old men, friends and enemies, were killed without distinction. They even massacred the members of their own family, mothers, &c.—(See *Lettre du P. Chevron, Annales*, tom. xv. p. 41.)

before been flowing.* The mild and inoffensive air of these strangers, the small gifts which they brought, the crucifix glittering on their breast interested barbarian majesty. A piece of land was assigned them where they could build a hut of branches and plant some vegetables.

A cross was elevated; the celestial power that bent the head of the Cæsars before this long despised and infamous wood, soon moved the hearts of these islanders. A crowd collected around the new comers; their extraordinary life, divided between prayer and labor, the care they gave the sick and those wounded in their frequent savage wars, the cures they effected, less by their remedies than by the power of Him who sent them, conciliated the respect and affection of a part of the inhabitants. According to the example of the Divine Missionary, they *act before teaching*.†

Destitute of the aid of an interpreter, they collected with the help of signs, the most common words of the language, composed an alphabet, gathered the children around them, taught them to read and to bless the name of the true God.‡ Schools were opened through a whole Archipelago: the Missionaries were constantly passing from one island to another, in their frail barks, at the risk of perishing in the waves, or by the hands of barbarians who were enraged at not being able to induce them to take part in their infamous diversions.§

God blessed such generous efforts. The children becom-

* The king alone, in quality of God was served with whole bodies; in other kitchens the dead were dismembered. Fourteen victims have been counted at one time on the table of a prince. With roasted bodies living men were also frequently served, with their feet and hands tied; they were extended on large trays that their blood might not be lost . . . An old man was one day pointed out to me, who alone out of a village of three hundred souls escaped the oven.—(Letter of P. Chevron, p. 42.)

† Act. Ap. i. 1.

‡ *Annales*, tom. viii. p. 5, 6, 40.

§ *Annales*, tom. ix. page 24.

ing so many Apostles, chanted in their families the first truths of religion which were introduced into their hymns, and talked to their parents of the God who made heaven and earth, and promises his worshippers eternal joys. All hastened to their lessons, attracted by the sounds of the harmonica,* the chanting of hymns and the pomp of the Holy Sacrifice celebrated in a temple of boughs. The image of Mary attracted their regards, called forth questions, and in speaking of the Great Mother, the Son was also spoken of, who descended from heaven to crush the tyranny of the cruel Aruino.†

The *manica* with its three equal leaves, (the same trefoil by which St. Patrick used to teach the Irish idolators the mystery of the Holy Trinity,) became the symbol of one God in three persons.‡ The cross erected on the public place, and the sign of which was repeated on every forehead, incessantly recalled the principal doctrine of Christianity.

In proportion as the divine light insinuated itself from the senses into the soul of the idolators, they were ashamed of the absurdity and degradation of their worship. Nine months had scarcely passed after the arrival of the Missionaries before two islands had planted the Cross on the ruins of superstition, and a whole Archipelago celebrated with transports of joy the arrival of the Pontiff who came, in the name of Jesus Christ, to take possession of the fifth quarter of the world. What a beautiful sight to see this prince of the Church enthroned on *an inverted tray*, in a cathedral constructed of reeds, in the midst of a throng of half naked savages!§

Every day witnessed the fall of an idol beneath the blows

* Ibid., tom. ix. p. 40.

† This is the name which the inhabitants of Gambier give to the bad Spirit.

‡ *Annales*, tom. ix. p. 34.

§ Mgr. Rouchouse, of the diocese of Lyons, Apostolic Vicar of Eastern Australasia, who arrived at the isles of Gambier the 9th May, 1835. (*Annales*, tom. ix., p. 144.)

of its undeceived adorers; and, before the end of 1836, the rest of these monstrous fetiches were shipped to France, which, in exchange for these trophies, sent the missionaries cloth to cover their neophytes, medicines for the sick, materials for spinning and weaving cotton, instruments of labor, masonry, carpentry, and husbandry, and for the building of churches and houses.

There the Catholic priests are still the same as they were in the forests of America, in the 17th century; in our Europe in the Middle Age—men of science and of arts. One is occupied with medicine, another digs wells, plants vines, or is employed in freeing the Archipelago from the formidable animals which devour even the roots of the trees.* A third traverses the ocean to procure for the new converts of Gambier books printed in their own language.

It is thus that these poor islanders, who, not long since, cried “A miracle!” at seeing water boiling in a kettle,† have rapidly become initiated into the prodigies of our arts, and receive from the same hands the knowledge which leads them to their celestial country, and that which softens the severity of the terrestrial journey.

The same means effected the same prodigies at New Zealand and in the isles of Wallis and Futuna, where the priests of Mary are reaping, in such abundance, the fruits of their toil, and the blood of one of their brethren.‡

“But,” some zealous Protestant will object, “these christians do not read the Bible.” This is true. Mgr. Pompallier, landing at New Zealand, had probably only a Latin Bible,

* *Annales*, tom. ix. p. 19.

† *Annales*, tom. ix. p. 144.

‡ The Father Chanel, massacred at Futuna, at the close of 1811. (See concerning the conversion of the Wallisians, Futunians, and New Zealanders, and the admirable spirit which animates them, the relations of the Maristes missionaries.) *Annales*, tom. xiv. p. 191, 201, 205, 247; tom. xv. p. 29, 399, 403, 407, &c.

and I do not know that he translated it into the *Maori*, as the Methodist ministers had done, who, he found, had been established there for twenty years. Thus the twenty-five or thirty thousand proselytes there under his direction, have not the happiness of reading the Bible, as some hundreds of Methodist neophytes do, and of discovering in the divine book, among other pretty things, that Jesus Christ was the inventor of fire-arms;* but, on the other hand, these good people know all that it is necessary to know, in order to love and serve God, to fear his justice, desire heaven, cherish one's neighbor, hold theft, injustice, and immodesty in horror, and lead a life worthy of the best days of Christianity.

It must be acknowledged, the Catholic priest is somewhat the man of routine. He imagines that, in religion, as in other sciences, he must commence with the least, place the alphabet before folios, and teach the Institutes before the Code. He believes that a good catechist can, in an hour, give a heathen more knowledge of christian doctrine, than he could acquire by two months' reading of such a book as the Bible. He has read in St. Paul, that, to the carnal man, still a child in the things of God, milk is

* "A sad spectacle presented itself to me on visiting a tribe almost entirely Protestant. There I found everywhere the Bible translated into the *Maori* tongue by Methodist ministers. The young people, proud of their pretended knowledge, quoted and commented upon the sacred text without discrimination, pretending to find in it all their own ideas, and even the invention of fire-arms, the discovery of which they attributed to Jesus Christ. Now these poor people, can it be believed, did not even know that there was one God in three persons, that the Word became man and died for us. And their teachers have been twenty years in New Zealand! Instruction, moreover, is not the only advantage which our disciples have over those of the Protestant missionaries. Strangers easily distinguish our catechumens by the air of candor and kindness which contrasts, it is said, with the stern and harsh physiognomy of the heretical islanders." (Letter of Father Petitjean, vol. xiv. p. 211.)

necessary, not meat.* Instead, then, of imitating the cruel missionary, who throws the Bible to the poor Australian, saying to him, Comprehend that, or you will be lost! he becomes the nurse, who transforms bread into milk; or, according to the beautiful comparison of M. De Maistre, he imitates *the dove, which, before distributing to her little ones the grain that is to nourish them, breaks and pulverises it, that it may not harm them.*

As to the profound veneration which is due to the divine code of the Scriptures, who inspires it most—the Protestant minister who throws it to every passenger, at the risk of seeing it soon converted into shoes for Pagans,† or the Catholic missionary, who reads it every day at the altar, quotes and explains it reverently in the pulpit, and who would give himself up to be crushed under foot, strangled, crucified, burned before a slow fire, rather than deliver it to the tyrant who demands it? Is it astonishing that neophytes and executioners conceive a high idea of the Bible, and say there must be something divine in this book?

We must, then, acknowledge that the Catholic method is no less adapted to form new disciples to Jesus Christ than to preserve and perfect those who already have adopted it. We will now see if it contains nothing wounding to human dignity.

CHAPTER XXX.

ON THE PRETENDED DESPOTISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.
INTELLECTUAL INDEPENDENCE OF THE CATHOLIC.
HIS SECURITY AGAINST ARBITRARY POWER.

WITH the enormous prerogative of infallibility conceded to the Pope and corps of Bishops, with the obligation it imposes

* *Tanquam parvulis in Christo, lac vobis potum dedi, non escam,*
&c. I. Cor. iii. 1, 2.—Heb. v. 12.

† See above, ch. xviii.

upon the faithful, to submit to their decisions in matters of doctrine, what becomes of the first of our rights, liberty of thought and conscience! What permanent danger is there in that power which commands without control whatever is most active and energetic in human nature, and disposes, at its pleasure, of the mind and will of a hundred and sixty millions of men!

“When whatever we possess most intimate, most individual and free—conscience, thought, and interior life—is concerned, to abdicate the government of one’s self, to deliver one’s self up to a foreign power, is a true moral suicide, a servitude a hundred times worse than that of the body or the soul.” *

This is repeated in unison by most Protestant writers, and thinking men of our universities, who desire for themselves the liberty to think and teach, and are displeased that our Bishops should destroy the impious and immoral reveries which they would impose upon the youthful intellect of their pupils.

But the truth is, that the Catholic system is precisely the only one in which exists, in principle and practice, true independence of thought and conscience; whilst, in every other system, there is always, in fact as well as in principle, a profound and degrading subjection of the intellect, and an adoration of the thoughts and words of man.

It is a principle universally professed by all Catholics, from the Pontiff of Rome to the humblest of his spiritual children, that the word of God, whether written or traditional, is the only subject of the faith of the christian; that no Pope, even if he were at the head of all the Bishops of the world, united in general council, can, or ever will be able to add or subtract anything whatever from the doctrines, precepts of morality, and maxims of perfection, taught by Jesus Christ and his Apostles, or from the sacraments instituted by him; that

* Guizot, *Cours d’Histoire Moderne*.

the sovereign and infallible authority of the Church is limited, by the Divine Founder, to the teaching of revealed doctrine (which implies the right to define, in case of difference, and to excommunicate the refractory from the religious society), to the administration of the sacraments, to the formation and execution of laws adapted to maintain purity of faith and morals, and the majesty of worship.

In principle, then, the Catholic depends on God alone for his faith. If men interpose, it is only as depositories of the divine teaching and witnesses of the faith of all ages. He is a subject, who, while submitting to the magistrate as local executor of the general law, obeys only the sovereign.

But does the practice harmonize with the principle? What guarantees to the Catholic that the Pope shall not mingle tares with the good grain, and give his own individual thought for that of Jesus Christ and the universal Church?

The first guarantee of the Catholic against the aberrations of the Pope is in the formal and repeatedly reiterated promises of Jesus Christ, which would plainly be at fault, if the Church should ever be misguided by its chief—a promise the authenticity of which could be proved to him, if necessary, by the Protestant Bibles, in which it may be read.*

His second guarantee is in the constitution of the Church itself, which is the most inconvenient place imaginable for those who would wish to innovate in matters of doctrine, even if they were the Popes themselves.

Except in case of mental alienation, which has never yet been known in the person of the successor of St. Peter, but which, if it occurred, would embarrass Catholics as little as the very frequent event of the death of their head, a Pope, however ill-disposed we may imagine him to be, would never take it upon himself to change the teaching of the Church; for, in evil as in good, no man in his senses attempts the im-

* See as above, ch. xx. xxi.

possible, and lightly runs the evident risk of being cast from the highest rank into the mire.

Even if the deceitful Pontiff obtained by address, or otherwise, the silence of the seventy-two counsellors who aid him in the government of the Church, and most of whom have elevated him to his present situation (difficulty first, which much resembles a moral impossibility), how could he deceive or intimidate the fifteen hundred Patriarchs, Primates, Archbishops, and Bishops of the Catholic world, they also being, by divine right, judges of the doctrine, and pledged by the most solemn oaths to defend it, even to the shedding of blood; by their situation, also, obliged to possess a thorough knowledge of universal doctrines, and surrounded by theologians grown gray in sacred study; the guide of innumerable believers, among whom religion numbers learned defenders, and a large proportion of whom are sufficiently well instructed to be struck with the least change in matters of religion.

Is it not evident that success in error is here impossible! Two observations will place this impossibility in a still clearer light.

1st. The Catholic religion is not a purely speculative theory addressed only to the intellect, to be comprehended only by the very limited class of thinking men. It is essentially practical, and accessible to every mind by the obligations it imposes, and the sensible forms with which it clothes itself. It has no doctrine, no precept, no sacrament, which is not manifested to the senses, which is not reflected, embodied and materialised in some sort in the daily practices, solemnities, ceremonies, chants and prayers, and even in the architecture and decoration of the temples; in a word, in every part of the worship. If an alteration, then, were introduced into the Catholic idea, the form also must be adjusted to it; and if it were possible that a hundred and sixty millions of men should consent to preserve silence, the stones themselves would cry aloud at the innovation.

2d. No definition in matters of doctrine has been or ever will be given by a Pope or a General Council approved and confirmed by the Pope, unless this extreme measure were prompted by doctrinal differences which put in peril the unity of faith. The sentence, therefore, is always preceded by full and solemn debates which command the general attention. Two parties are confronted: the one, more or less numerous has for its founders or advocates, as is always seen, Bishops, Priests, Religious and Princes, who put everything in requisition to obtain for it confidence, and to avert the painful prepossession which is hovering over it; the other party composed of a large majority of clergy, are occupied with defending the ancient faith, and arming the faithful against the new opinions while they are awaiting the supreme decision.

The Scriptures, the monuments of the tradition and faith of all ages, are discussed, and cited on each side; innumerable documents, of every shade of opinion are interchanged; the universities and religious bodies are ranged on the right and left; the Princes interpose and join their voices to those of the Bishops that the Sovereign Pastor may cause his voice to be heard. The Catholic world is in expectation, and even heretical societies maliciously lend an ear. Must not the least discreet Pope necessarily be upon his guard!

The Pontiff prescribes public prayers, and if he cannot assemble the Bishops, he establishes congregations of Cardinals, Bishops and Theologians, who for many months and sometimes for many years, discuss a question already thoroughly discussed, read all that has been written of importance on each side, listen patiently to the arguments of the prejudiced, and neglect nothing to bring to light the true doctrine of the Universal Church upon the point under dispute. It must be observed, indeed, with regard to the principles of Catholicism, a doctrinal definition is not the result

of the supernatural and sudden inspiration of the Pope, or the Bishops assembled in Council; it is not a new revelation, or the creation of a dogma hitherto unknown; but it is the solemn declaration of what the Church has always believed and taught more or less definitely; and the effect which Jesus Christ has promised to the pastors assembled is to prevent them from error in the distinction they make between the constant faith of the Church and the new opinions.

Let the Pope decide; it is a hundred thousand to one that, independently of the divine promise, he will pronounce aright. If, after he has spoken, the Church bows with respect and answers *Amen*, there is a certainty, for every man of sense, that the Pope has not made an innovation.

Considering the Church, then, merely in a human point of view, there is, and can be no social organisation which binds so strongly the hands of its chiefs, and presents so many guarantees against the exercise of arbitrary power. Thus *this permanent danger* which is thought to exist in a *power that absolutely disposes of the understanding and will of one hundred and sixty millions of men*, has no reality but in the brain of fools.

Finally, history comes to give her testimony that the deposit of Catholic Faith is pure from all human alloy. How many attempts have been made at innovation in every age by the most distinguished minds, from the great Tertullian and the sublime Origen to the author of the "*Essai sur l'Indifférence!*" Yet, these powerful minds who would have made all things bend under their yoke in a church of human formation, have been dashed to pieces against the immoveable rock on which Jesus Christ has built his Church. This is because the Catholic recognises in genius the mission to preserve, to defend and to cultivate the common inheritance of christian truths, but not to change its divine limits.

Thus while we can point out in history the precise date

and the inventors of the different religious systems which have enjoyed a longer or shorter period of favor in the separated Churches, we defy heresy to cite one single dogma, one single rule of morals or of perfection, one single sacrament, which we have adopted on the word of any learned man or Pope whatever.

The Catholic, while lending a docile ear to the Church, has then the assurance that he is listening to Jesus Christ; and if he relinquishes the very questionable power of creating for himself a religion, it is into the hands of God himself. If this is not the true and perfect liberty of the children of God, where is it to be found, and in what does it consist?

CHAPTER XXXI

OF THE PRETENDED ENFRANCHISEMENT OF THOUGHT BY
PROTESTANTISM.—SPIRITUAL DESPOTISM OF SOVEREIGNS.
EVANGELICAL CHURCH OF PRUSSIA.

NEVER did the human mind attain a greater independence, than in the sixteenth century, when Luther, that *liberator of modern thought*, to speak in academic language,* throwing off the yoke of Catholic authority, summoned every one to invest himself with the sovereign power in matters of faith.†

Yet, where can be found an instance of a more blind credulity, of a more entire intellectual abnegation, than among

* Michelet, *Mémoires de Luther*, pref., p. 12.

† *Let us break their ties and cast off their yoke from our heads*, cried Luther, borrowing the words of the Psalmist, in his answer to the bull of Leo X., “without remembering,” says Bossuet, “that this unfortunate canticle is by David put in the mouth of rebels, whose plots are raised against the Lord and against his Christ.”—(*Hist. des Variations*, liv. i., § 26.)

the nations which then severed the tie of religious unity! We see them exchanging the Catholic doctrine, which for fifteen centuries had guided generations of Christians into the luminous paths of truth and virtue, for the incoherent, fluctuating, absurd and supremely immoral speculations of a few men whose heart had corrupted their understanding.

Germany revered, as a prophet, the inventor of the slavery of the will, the dissolute monk of Wittemberg, endowed, it is true, with great eloquence, but at the same time an impudent and low buffoon, dogmatizing in taverns amid the fumes of beer, incredibly violent in his bursts of passion,* and outraging in his fury that same Bible which he presented for the only rule of faith.

A part of Switzerland poured out its blood to defend the nocturnal visions of Zwingle.† Geneva professed the frightful doctrines of Calvin and drove brutally from her walls or burned alive those who dared to protest against the definitions of her sanguinary apostle.

England, in order to free herself from what was called papal tyranny, humbly bestowed the spiritual supremacy on the abominable tyrant, who, according to his own avowal, never spared the life of a man or the honor of a woman. Some years later, the worthy daughter of Henry VIII. and Anna Boleyn took the title of *reigning Sovereign of the Anglican Church*, and from the interior of the palace where she lived, surrounded by a throng of lovers, spies and executioners, that cruel woman created a new religion for her subjects, and placed the English between the *Thirty-nine Articles* and the Scaffold.

* "I tremble," exclaimed Melancthon, "when I think of the passions of Luther. They do not yield in violence to the rage of Hercules;" and he acknowledges that he has received blows from him.—(*Lettre à Théodore.*)

† See *Histoire des Variations*, liv. ii., § 27.

If we follow Protestantism through its innumerable religious transformations, from its origin in the brain of Luther to the last founder of the last in date of the thousand and one religions that it has produced ; always and everywhere we shall see it tossed from system to system at the sport of influential ministers or absurd visionaries, submitting alternately or simultaneously to the direction of innumerable popes, all more powerful than the Roman Pontiff, since in religion they play the part of inventors.

And what are these names, of Lutherans, Zwinglians, Calvinists, Melancthonians, Gomarists, Arminians, Socinians, Mennonites, Vaudois, Swedenborgians, Wesleyan Methodists, Whitfieldian Methodists, and numerous others equally peculiar, if not the badges of human religion, the fatal acknowledgment that man has placed his mind and conscience at the mercy of a man ?

The liberty of interpreting the Bible at one's pleasure, and creating religions, monopolized at first by party leaders, soon became, under the Reformation, the exclusive privilege of temporal sovereigns, who, "imagined," says a profound controversialist, "that they must believe for their subjects, and that their own opinion was the supreme law."* Thus, we see pastors and their flocks drilling like lacqueys, under the iron crook of kings and sovereign lords, and frequently receiving orders to change their religion, from a foster father or mother, a prince or princess, countersigned by a regent of one sex or the other.

Nothing, in truth, is more natural or more just than this religious omnipotence of temporal sovereigns in reformed countries. Is not Protestantism indebted to them for its existence ? Who could, without doing violence to history, dispute with Henry VIII. and Elizabeth, with Frederic of Saxony, Philip of Hesse, and other German Electors and Princes, with

* Moehler, *Symbolism*, introd., p. 69.

Frederic I. of Denmark, Gustavus Vasa in Sweden, the Prince of Orange in Holland, the Lords of Berne in Switzerland, the glory of submitting their people to the New Gospel at the point of the sword. Moreover, could a religious system, which gives every one liberty of action, while it grants liberty of belief, and which made its entrance into the world amid the ferocity of the Anabaptists and the cruel peasants' war, be restrained by political chiefs, under pain of seeing the States deluged with blood? It was very wise, then, for princes to attach religion to their territory, and submit consciences to a fiscal imposition.

Some of them, as Elizabeth, Gustavus Vasa, and Frederic I., wishing to put an end to the too prolific action of the Bible, which, in the hands of the people, brought forth every day some new religion, saw fit to oppose to it some royal religions, with an order to their courts of justice to treat as a felon and as guilty of high treason, any one who should undertake to give the Bible an interpretation contrary to the royal exegesis.*

Other princes, as the German nobles, preferred to reserve to themselves the amusement of seeing their people rove from Lutheranism to Calvinism, from Calvinism to Lutheranism, or to any other religion which pleased them. Thus, in the Palatinate, Frederic III. changed his subjects from Lutherans to Calvinists, then gave them a catechism of his own invention, in 1562. At his death, in 1576, his son Louis re-established Lutheranism; but, in 1582, another Frederic restored to their dignity the dogmas of Calvin, and ordered submission to the decisions of Dort under pain of banishment.

In the principality of Anhalt Dessau, John George substituted, in 1586, the Calvinistic worship for the Lutheran,

* For England, see Cobbett, *Letters on the Reformation*. Camden, *Annales*, &c., 1571. For Sweden, the fact cited above (chap. 19) proves that Gustavus Vasa always ruled the consciences of his subjects.

and published, in 1597, a symbol, in twenty-eight articles, obligatory under pain of exile. Prince John succeeded him, and ordered, under the same penalty, a return to Lutheranism.

In Hesse Cassel, the Landgrave Maurice deposed the Lutheran ministers, gave their pulpits to the Calvinists, and imposed on the Hessians the Confession of Dort.

In Brandebourg, the Margrave, John Sigismund, in 1614, abandoned for himself and followers the Lutheran doctrine, and established Calvinism, with the ameliorations, however, furnished by the particular creed which he gave to his dear flock.*

But all these religious manifestations are thrown into the shade by the achievement of evangelical amalgamation effected in our own time by the King of Prussia, Frederic William III.

This prince, after the frosts of Russia had freed him from the terrible conqueror who had made Berlin one of his pleasure houses, appeared to have but one idea—that of abolishing the Catholic Church in his states, and rebuilding on its ruins the already decayed temple of Protestantism. His zeal was only more inflamed by his various unsuccessful attempts to range under the same standard the numerous and turbulent families who had sprung from the bosom of reform.

From 1817 to 1834, when he gave the finishing touch to his *Evangelical Church of the Rhine*, there issued from the royal head a series of circulars, regulations, statutes, ordinances, and edicts, which in volume would compare with the complete works of Luther. But the most important document is the *Agenda* or *Ritual*, issued in 1826, and regulating the divine service of the new worship. A species of mass was prescribed, with crucifix, candles, and incense, the chanting of the Kyrie Eleison, with a kind of German Gloria, Crede, Preface, Dominus vobiscum, Amen and Alleluia; in a word, it was, for the most part, a restoration of what had hitherto been called the superstitions of the Romish Church.

* See Moehler, *Symbolism*, introd., p. 69, 70.

Yet, by a truly paternal attention, the doctrine of the real presence of Jesus Christ in the supper was preserved to the Lutherans; and to the Calvinists, the doctrine of the mystical presence was allowed; so that the minister who administered the supper must say to the Lutheran communicant: *Receive the flesh and blood of Jesus Christ*, and to the Calvinist, placed at his side: *Receive the figure of the flesh and blood!*

The little bell was found; nothing was necessary but to attach it to the neck of some thousand of ministers—Lutherans, Calvinists, Prelates, Rationalists, and Super-rationalists, &c. The difficulty did not intimidate Frederic William, who, failing of theological arguments, had in reserve two hundred thousand bayonets, and justly thought, that ministers armed only with the Bible would be more tractable than the soldiers of Napoleon.

The order was issued from Berlin, Feb. 28, 1834, to conform to the *Agenda*, and the troops marched against those who made a show of resistance. Insubordinate ministers were supplanted. Of two who alone dared to raise their voice, one was imprisoned, and the other banished. The inhabitants of the village of Oels, in Silesia, obstinately refused to open their temples to the ministers of the new worship. A battalion arrived, killed or wounded a score of rebels, and twelve or fourteen bailiffs established in each family, soon forced these brave people to confess the doctrinal infallibility of the prince.*

Is anything more needed to show the frightful intellectual degradation into which Protestantism has led its partisans? It is, however, from the ranks of this religion, which has inflicted upon twenty christian nations injuries unknown to the followers of Buddha, that professors of philosophy and history

* See with regard to these evangelical expeditions, the journals of the period, especially the *Universal Gazette*, of Augsburg, Dec. 1834: Jan. 1835.

have come forth, who, from the chairs of our universities have dared to cast upon Catholic nations the reproach of servility, and claim for their king-worshipping sects the glory of having enfranchised human thought.

In fact, there are men who wish to excel in impudence and provoke contempt.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE SAME SUBJECT CONTINUED.—ACTUAL PROTESTANTISM.
ENTHUSIASTIC SECTS.—RATIONALISTS.—SERVILITY
OF BOTH.

I AM aware of the efforts of the Protestant writers of our day to free themselves from the responsibility of so much meanness, and relieve their churches from the ignominy with which they are invested by uncompromising history.

If we trust to them, Protestantism has nothing in common with these contemptible parodies of Catholicism, so long enacted, in despite of its fundamental principle, by men who did not comprehend it, or who feigned not to do so. This was, at most, only a purifying process, necessary to the newly-born among the Papist impurities, which sullied his cradle. Is it astonishing, that, bursting the narrow swaddling clothes in which the Church had compressed him for fifteen hundred years, three centuries were required to break his bonds and overcome his profound lethargy? Now that so many royal hands have completely roused him, he will define for us the idea which agitated him almost unconsciously, in the sixteenth century. That idea was *liberty of examination, opinion, and worship*; it was the *principle of liberty and individuality applied to the affairs of religion*; it was *irreconcilable hatred*

*against all authority in religion; it was the insurrection of the human mind against absolute power in the spiritual order.**

Let us admit that Protestantism has not been comprehended, either by its authors or its partisans, and that, born blind, it did not open its eyes until the nineteenth century; still it has always made a poor commencement, as far as concerns independence, and, judging by the sports of its protracted childhood, it will not make much progress.

It is not, however, on account of faithlessness to its fundamental principle of contempt and hatred of all religious authority, that Protestantism has constantly found itself exposed to the mercy of absurd visionaries, or popes reigning over the conscience of men by the power of the sabre. This subjection is, on the contrary, the inevitable consequence of the *insurrection against the power established by God in the spiritual order.*

If we cast an intelligent glance over history, we shall, in every part of it, read this law of eternal order: Whoever despises legitimate authority will be punished with slavery; and the more legitimate the authority, that is, marked with the divine seal, the more complete and degrading will be the servitude. If you refuse to obey those whom God has chosen for your parents, you will be led as the blind, by fools, or bound by executioners. The first slave of whom mention is made in the first history was a rebellious son.†

In vain does man affect, in our day, that absolute independence which is only granted to the *wild ass of the desert.*‡ The nineteenth century will see what all ages have seen, man

* See M. Vinet, Professor at Lausanne, *Supplement* to No. 129 of the *Narrateur Religieux*. M. Guizot, *Cours d'Histoire Moderne*, Leçon 12th.

† Maledictus Chanaan, servus servorum erit fratribus suis. (Genes. ix. 25.)

‡ Vir vanus in superbiam erigitur, et tanquam pullum onagri se liberum natum putat. (Job xi. 12.)

panting under the debasing power of man, in proportion to the efforts he makes to throw off the yoke of divine power.

Look more closely at Protestantism as it is, and it will not be found less enslaved at the present day than it was formerly. Its fundamental principle of individualism in religious matters destroying, as we have seen, the human foundation of Christian faith, as the rational conviction that it is in possession of the true doctrine of Jesus Christ, has placed inevitably the human mind between the rationalism which excludes all belief, and the blind faith which excludes all reason. Thus, the innumerable fractions which it contains are all arranged under two very distinct banners: on one side, enthusiastic believers, who still profess the divinity of Christ and the Bible, such as the Pietists, in Germany, and the Quakers and Methodists in England and the United States; on the other side, the Socinians, Latitudinarians, and Rationalists, who, denying or questioning the divine mission of Christ, which is acknowledged in the Koran, are, in fact, less christian than the disciples of Mahomet. But, neither the former in their faith, nor the latter in their unbelief, offer us that high intellectual independence which the Reformation boasts of having given to the world.

And, in the first place, does it become the ignorant and blindly-guided disciples of Spener, Zinzendorf, George Fox, and John Wesley, to boast of their freedom of thought—they who, rejecting every other light than that of divine inspiration, have formally renounced the right of thinking in matters of religion, and blindly follow the impulse of the visionaries or impostors who direct them?

If we see the most numerous and active of these sectarians, the Methodists, reproducing, with a rare intrepidity, in the presence of the nineteenth century, the long-banished dogmas of Calvin, it is because no enthusiastic sect has ever possessed, in the same degree, the art of suppressing reason and exciting

the brain. It might be said, that the genius who gave to the Romans the idea of the legion, has revealed to the children of Wesley the magnetic power of the *Revival*.^{*} What admirable innocence is that of the little flock to whom the minister, when he has forgotten the hour for preaching, can uncere- moniously say: "Be not surprised at my delay, my brethren; I have just had a conversation with Christ on the vine!" †

Is it among the large class of indifferent persons and ministers who wish no longer to speak of dogmas, in any form, that we shall find the free-thinkers of the Reformation?

* Let us see the operation of the *Revival* or *regeneration* in the United States, where the Methodists enjoy almost unbounded liberty. "They establish, during fine summer weather, a camp meeting, assembling in the forest to the number of two or three thousand, without counting spectators. They make huts of the branches of trees, the whole of which forms a vast circular inclosure. There, elevated on a platform, preachers, with stentorian voice, address the multitude in turn for five or six days, from five to ten o'clock in the morning, and from sunset to near midnight; and what do they preach? Hell, with frightful pictures of darkness, flames, and demons. The women have nervous attacks; the men have them too, or profess to have them. Both roll on the ground of the inclosure. The preachers and their assistants hasten to the spot: It is the coming of the Holy Spirit, they cry, howling into the ears of these maniacs. They turn them over, they move them from place to place, whilst the male and female patients, the last always the most numerous, send forth convulsive sobs, utter groans and inarticulate cries. The scene becomes more and more animated; the spectators have soon before their eyes only a horrible confusion of arms, legs, and heads, beating pell-mell against the ground. This is termed *receiving the spirit*. But what spirit? What takes place in the tents by lamp-light or even sun-light cannot be described." (*Mes Doutes*, tom. ii. p. 19.)

† This is the excellent excuse which M. Malan, pastor of the Genevese Methodists, gave to his audience, one day when he had kept them waiting more than half-an-hour. (See *Voyage pittoresque, historique et littéraire de Genève*, by M. Lalande, ch. xxxiii. *Ami de la Religion*, Feb. 4th, 1843.)

As I have previously shown, nothing degrades and paralyzes the intellect more than indifference and unbelief.* If there is a fact proved to the conscientious observer, it is that unbelievers are all on trust so, and reject christian creeds through pure credulity. Who among them could say, without violating his conscience: No one has taught me to disbelieve; if I despise all religions, it is because the profound study I have made of them has revealed to me their falseness.

Are not these two principles, which are at the foundation of Protestant unbelief and philosophic incredulity—that *every one is a judge, in a last appeal, of the Bible*; that *every one must admit only that of which his reason clearly forms an idea*—articles of faith adopted confidently on the word of Luther, Socinus, or Jean Jacques? Could axioms so prolific of absurdities, even when not considered in themselves or in their applications, be the fruit of an independent and considerate reasoning?

Either the unbeliever is lulled into indifference while he renounces the knowledge of moral truth, or what is he? His soul, a stranger to the sublime realities of the invisible order, of which, however, it makes a part, is transferred into the service of the vile appetites of the body: it is a grain of salt which the hand of the Creator has mingled with a mass of flesh to prevent it from corrupting. If, on the contrary, the unbeliever seeks the immoveable rock of truth in the deep void of his individual thought, will he do more than exhaust himself in the pursuit of phantoms, and revolve forever in the circle of human dreams?

Let us finish with one fact, which confirms what we have said of the servile tendencies of Protestantism. It has put in circulation those two principles, unknown to antiquity: *an honest man never changes his religion. We must live and die in the religion of our fathers.* Absurd propositions, which

* See 1st Problem, ch. 4th, 53.

betray an extreme incapacity for reflection or a disgusting servility.

Indeed, what does this signify? That an honest man must be either so stupid as never to perceive the falseness of the religion in which he has had the misfortune to be born, or so hypocritical as to conceal his religious convictions, and sport, even to death, with God, his conscience, and his fellow-men. What more can be said? That, if it pleased our fathers to adore a cat, after the manner of the Egyptians, and to eat men in honor of the gods, as the Anthropophagi of the South Sea, we must live and die like them, adorers of cats and devourers of men.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

ADVANTAGES OF THE CATHOLIC METHOD.—RELIGIOUS EQUALITY AND UNITY.—CONCLUSION.

EVERY one must now see the truth of what I have already advanced—that the Catholic system is the only one in which there exists, in principle and practice, true independence of conscience and of thought.

There alone reigns perfect freedom of mind, which does not consist, indeed, in rejecting religious authority, as the Protestants, who, depriving themselves of every means of arriving with certainty at religious truth, introduce moral suicide; but, in freeing one's self from the darkness of error and from the endless fluctuations of human opinion, by the certain possession of divine truth.*

It is only there that true intellectual force prevails; for the intellect is only strong through the truths which she possesses,

* *Veritas liberabit vos.* (John viii. 32.)

and her steps in the intellectual world are only falls, or idle groping, whenever she departs from the landmarks planted by Christ.

There human thought alone becomes immeasurably ennobled and elevated by its union with the divine thought, whilst everywhere else it creeps on the earth, and is dragged along by man. The Catholic believes in God alone; he knows that the divine word, entrusted to the Universal Church, can neither be lost nor sullied in passing through the human mouth which transmits it.

There alone is found true equality, minds enlightened by the same knowledge, and wills restrained by the same duties. Governing and governed, pontiffs and people, the highest genius and the lowest intellect, descend to the same level, or rather rise on the wings of faith, to the height of the same conceptions. In the order of necessary truths, Bossuet and Fénelon know nothing which a peasant boy of twelve years old does not know as well as they. Each knows enough to guide himself, no one enough to elevate him above his brethren. An admirable and divine system, where the learned man is obliged to humiliate himself to the simplicity of the child, and the child is elevated to the wisdom of the learned, that all may respect and love each other as the children and disciples of the same Father and the same Master.

On the other hand, reward pride, as Protestantism does, by proportioning religious knowledge to the intellectual power of each individual, you consecrate intellectual inequality in religion, and inequality on this point will sanctify all other kinds of inequality; for it is intellectual power which classes men and governs the world. But this consideration belongs more properly elsewhere.

Finally, in Catholicism alone is found the divine character of unity. Let us allow an eloquent controversialist to celebrate "that sacred union which connects men not only so

far as to make them citizens of the same society, but members of a mystic body, not collected together by the sentiment of mutual wants, not united by the ties of blood and of kindred or by temporary interests, but joined, or if I may so say, blended in the adoration of Him beyond whom human thought cannot ascend; meeting in these high moral and intellectual regions, in the warm atmosphere of charity, and laboring in common, not to increase the wealth and power of the common society, but to enrich and adorn it with new virtues; still more, resisting nothing but their passions, hating nothing but vice, and walking as belongs to intelligent children, not with their eyes cast down upon the miserable goods of earth, but fixed on Heaven!

“Reflect again upon the incontestable superiority of this influence over all the influences which can contribute to the union of men. Religious unity, in fact, soaring in a sphere superior to those partial sympathies in laws, customs and interests, which only act for a limited time and in a limited circle, is neither circumscribed by rivers nor mountains; it traverses the vast extent of seas to place in the mouth of nations, the most unlike and the most distant from each other, the same hymn of praise; in their mind the same symbol of faith, in their heart the same sentiment of charity; everywhere teaching the same doctrine, and announcing by the thousand voices of its ministers the same truth, it prostrates vast multitudes before the same altar; each of those souls whom it unites on all points of the globe, in a holy community of prayer and love, is, as it were, suspended by one of those innumerable golden chains which all meet and join in the hand of God, that intellectual Sun: as the rays of the material sun diffused through space, all meet at that centre of fire which we see sparkling above our heads.” *

Compare with this vast society, whose members, scattered

* Wiseman, *Lectures*, &c., vol. i., p. 206.

over the face of the earth, have all but one creed, one altar, one voice, the reformed Churches with their thousand creeds and thousand discordant voices, and of whom according to Tertullian, schism constitutes the unity;* then, with your hand upon your heart, ask yourself, on which side are found the children of truth and love, and on which side the victims of error and pride.

I think it has been sufficiently demonstrated, that the Catholic system, reconciling the respective claims of divine and human reason, is the only one which can unite our thought to the thought of God, and place us in the situation to render to the supreme intelligence the homage of a faith immovable in its foundation, and enlightened and rational in its motives.

Let us now see if this system so adapted to give stability to the understanding has equal power to warm and elevate the heart.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

CHRISTIAN DEIFICATION OF MAN.—GRACE.—ITS DEFINITION, ITS NECESSITY.—SACRAMENTS.

THE aim proposed to man by Jesus Christ, is indeed placed at an alarming elevation. *Be you, therefore, perfect as also your heavenly Father is perfect.*†

This is progress, without doubt, upon the most gigantic scale; but it is also the evident tendency of humanity. When the father of lies said to Eve: *You shall be as*

* Quibus schisma unitas est. *De Præscript.*, § 42.

† Matth. v. 48.

Gods,* he only touched the strongest fibre of the human heart.

Man having left God desires to return to God; and if he is ignorant of the true means of deifying himself he will overthrow the political and intellectual world to exalt himself into a divinity. Behold, here, the haughty conqueror who says to a hundred subject people: "Adore me, for I am God."† There, see the proud philosopher who, not being able to arrogate divine honors exclusively to himself, deifies humanity in the mass, and exclaims: We are all God.

The Divine restorer of fallen man must then open to us the true road which leads from the degradation of the carnal life to the height of the spiritual and divine life; but how are we to be induced to walk in it?

If it is easy for the mind to ascend to God on the wings of faith, it is not so with the heart, that weak and low and languid portion of the human being. Who can lift it to heaven, the heart, which never rises above the earth except to soar into space upon the capricious breath of pride! To inflame the heart with Divine love, to regulate its affections and desires according to the affections and good pleasure of God, is the achievement of grace.

* Genes. iii. 5.

† Napoleon, who sometimes forgot in the intoxication of power, as he afterward avowed, that he was a Christian, often appeared to regret the time when princes had absolute power over the mind and body. He said one day to the grand-master of the University: "I was not born in my right time, Monsieur de Fontanes: see Alexander the Great; he could call himself the son of Jupiter, without contradiction. As for me, in this age I find a priest more powerful than I, for he reigns over souls, and I reign only over matter."—(*Histoire de Pie VII.*, by M. Arland, ch. xxix.) In this the reflective man finds an excellent demonstration of the following truth: *Without one sole head, invested with the supreme spiritual power, and independent of political power, Europe would still be Pagan, or would at once infallibly become so.*

But what is grace? will the man ask, who has never availed himself of it. Let us speak to this son of earth in a language which he can understand. "Have you never experienced," I would say to him, "the inexplicable but very real power of the graces of this world? Has your heart never pursued the enchanting vision of glory through the field of battle, or the difficult parts of science? Has it never taken wing to follow some earthly beauty? And is it not true that while you have been under the spell, the labors of Hercules have seemed to you less fabulous? In this, behold what the Christian soul experiences, only in a higher degree, when rising by reflection and prayer above the sphere of the body, a ray of infinite beauty appears to him and enkindles in his heart the flame of love; when contemplating the magnificent crowns and the eternal triumph of the conquerors of hell, of the flesh and the world, he feels the beating of his heart and cries with a noble ambition: And I also, I wish to become a hero of eternity, a saint! Is it possible that the infinite centre of all beauty, of all greatness, should be without its influence over the human heart, when we see this heart so often yielding to the attractions of inferior charms and more empty greatness."

Divine grace, then, is the attraction which the sublime realities of the invisible world exercise over the mind and will of man; an attraction no more mysterious and no less real than that which wheels the planets around their centre, with this difference that the one is involuntary and the other free.

Grace is, if I may so express it, the accompaniment of revelation. The latter is the action of God upon the understanding, enlightening it, and teaching it what we should believe and practise: the former is the action of God upon the heart to quicken it and accustom it to the practice of virtue.

If revelation is the voice of our Heavenly Father who

stoops to our ear and says to us: "What are you doing on the earth, my children? behold this beautiful Heaven where I have prepared you a throne!" Grace is the paternal hand of the Father which grasps ours while he says to us: "Courage, my children! if the path to heaven is rough, I will sustain your steps."

Now, as the Divine thought, in order to penetrate our intellect, which is veiled in a gross body, must assume the sensible form of external speech, so grace in order to reach the heart must, in some way, incarnate itself. Hence the *sacraments*, which are according to the Catholic doctrine, *the sensible and productive signs of grace*.

It is into this christian method of cure, by which the heavenly physician has prepared divine cordials for the soul, that we are about to enter.

CHAPTER XXXV.

FOUNDATION OF THE CATHOLIC THEORY OF JUSTIFICATION.

FALL OF MAN.—REDEMPTION.—HOW IT IS APPLIED TO US.

To form a just idea of the Catholic theory concerning the sacraments and the justification of man, we must go back to the great principles of christian philosophy of which this theory is only the application.

God, because He is *He who is*, and by whom all things are,* can love nothing except in Himself and by relation to Himself. All being, all perfection existing in Him and by Him, what could He love beyond Himself and His works? Nothing has nothing worthy of love.

God loves himself infinitely in his Word, in which he sees

* Exod. iii. 14.

the perfect and substantial image of his own perfections; it is also in his Word that he contemplates with love his creatures, for it is by it that he has drawn from nothing *all that is in Heaven* and on the earth, things visible and invisible, &c.;* but he only loves these beings in proportion to the resemblance which they bear to himself, that is, through their conformity to the Word. None among them will find favor in his sight and will enter into his glory, except the Heavenly Father sees in him the image of the beloved Son in whom alone he is well pleased.† It is in this sense that the Word, although it be the only and eternal Son of the Father, is so often called the first born of all creatures, the representative, the archetype, the head of the vast family of creatures.‡

Wo, then, to the creature, who, abusing his liberty, wanders from the way traced out for him by the Word, in which to complete the divine image! This did the rebel angel. This did also man, at the instigation of the fallen angel.

Adam, by his rebellion, threw off the divine character of the child of God, and became justly the slave of the rebel, whose will he obeyed, in contempt of the divine will. He transmitted to his children the human nature which he frightfully degraded; he transmitted it to his children; and these are all born *children of wrath*.§ Why? Because they are all *flesh*;|| because crime has changed the noble instincts which God gave to innocent man, into the vile and brutal

* Qui cum sit splendor gloriæ, et figura substantiæ ejus, portansque omnia verbo virtutis suæ. (Hebr. i. 3.) Qui est imago Dei invisibilis, &c. (Coloss. i. 15.)

† Ques præscivit et prædestinavit conformes fieri imaginis Filii sui, &c. (Rom. viii. 29.)

‡ Primogenitus omnis creaturæ . . . Ipse est ante omnes, et omnia in ipso constant, &c. (Coloss. i. 16, et seq.)

§ Ephes. ii. 3.—See 1st *Problem*, ch. xxii.

|| Genes. vi. 3.

appetites which too often sink him beneath the brute. Do not expect that heaven will ever open its gates to this degraded being, nor that the Most High will seat him upon his throne. Has he, then, who so passionately clings to earth, the least thought of heaven? Certainly not; *flesh and blood can never possess the kingdom of God.**

Divine justice required the death of man. Mercy pleaded for his pardon. The Word reconciles these opposite claims. With a devotion which captivates the adoration and love of angels and of men, He who by his divine nature is equal to the Father, condescends to take upon himself the human nature, the degraded nature of Adam, without the sin which is humanly inseparable from it. We have seen how the whole force of divine justice fell upon the soul and body of the great Victim.† *He was bruised for our sins*, according to the expression of the prophet,‡ and the body which the God-Man held from Adam by his mother, nailed to the infamous wood, shed from its veins the last drop of a blood, pure, it is true, but proscribed by love, and abandoned to the celestial vengeance. Humanity, purified and renewed by this blood, comes forth triumphant from the tomb, where it must descend in order to fulfil the divine decree: *Thou shalt die, and return to the dust*; and soon it will go to seat itself at the right hand of the Father.

Humanity is saved! But, how are men to be saved? A question which will seem minute to our pantheistic thinkers, who are occupied very much with the general, and not at all with the particular. Of what importance is it to them if we all should disappear under the bloody car of humanitarian revolutions, provided that humanity advances? This question, however, has pre-occupied the mind of Christ; for he became man, and delivered himself up to death, only to save every individual of the human family.§

* I. Cor. xv. 50.

† See 1st *Problem*, ch. xxx.

‡ Isa. liii. 5:

§ Rom. viii. 32.—Ephes. v. 2.

How can man, then, participate here below in the justice and sanctity of Jesus Christ, an indispensable condition for sharing, at a future time, his glory? * It is by reproducing in himself the life of Jesus Christ; that is to say, by putting aside the old man, and his corrupt inclinations; by the crucifixion of the flesh and its appetites; and incorporating himself with the new man, by a life of holiness and justice. †

It is in this moral transubstantiation, which transforms the corrupt child of Adam into a member of the body of Christ, living by his spirit, that the work of the regeneration and sanctification of man consists; the united work of divine activity operating through grace, and of human activity, which excited and strengthened by grace, freely co-operates with the divine action.

It is to effect, maintain, and perfect this intimate union of man with Jesus Christ, that the evangelical ministry exclusively conspires, that all the powers concur, and all the institutions bequeathed by the Savior to his Church, but, above all, the sacraments.

Let us cast a rapid glance over what I shall call the *dynamics* of Catholicism, and admire the efficacy of its means for uniting souls to their divine Head, and lifting them to heaven.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

A GLANCE AT THE SACRAMENTS.—PURGATORY.—PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.—WORSHIP OF SAINTS.

To regenerate man, it is necessary, in the first place, to efface the odious character of a rebellious child, the slave of

* Rom. viii. 17.

† Deponere . . . veterem hominem qui corrumpitur secundum desideria erroris . . . et induite novum hominem, &c. (Ephes. iv. 22, 24.) Qui autem Christi sunt, carnem suam crucifixerunt cum vitiis et concupiscentiis. (Galat. v. 24.)

Satan, and impress upon him the divine traits of him who has saved us by obedience. As we bring into being the image of the terrestrial man, we must, as the apostle says,* take at the new birth the resemblance of the celestial man. Such is the effect of baptism, in which the soul casts off the sullied image of Adam, and clothes itself with Jesus Christ.†

If it is an adult, before the baptism he must be instructed, open his mind to the light of the Gospel, and unite his thought to that of Jesus Christ by the tie of faith.‡ He must open his heart to penitence, detest his sins, and renounce them for ever. By this breaking of the heart, which is called contrition, the catechumen is united to Jesus crucified; he dies afterwards with him, and descends into the tomb, which was typified by the immersion formerly employed in baptism. The Holy Spirit, hovering over the baptismal waters, as in the first days of creation over the waters of chaos,§ to impregnate them, completes the destruction of the old man, and communicates to this mystic dead body the life of the new Adam, bathing the soul in the blood of Jesus Christ, at the same time that the body is baptized with it.|| The neophyte comes forth from the sacred font, radiant in innocence; heaven opens over his head, and his heavenly Father says to the angels: "Here is my child, the living image of my well-

* Sicut portavimus imaginem terreni, portemus et imaginem cœlestis. (I. Cor. xv. 49.)

† Quicumque enim in christo baptizati, estis, christum induisti. (Galat. iii. 27.)

‡ The regeneration of the child presented at the sacred font is the exclusive operation of the Holy Spirit and the Church. Lost by an act independent of his will, why should he not be saved in the same manner?

§ Spiritus dei ferebatur super aquas. (Genes. i. 1.)

|| St. Paul often reveals in his Epistles the deep significance of the baptismal rite. *An ignoratis quia quicumque baptizati sumus in Christo-Jesu in Morte ipsius baptizati sumus? Consepulti enim sumus eum illo per baptismum in mortem, &c.* (Rom. vi. 3 et seq.)

beloved Son! Watch over him with love along the road that leads him to his destined throne."*

The new-born soul enters upon the arena of the world, where it must choose between the arduous victories which heaven crowns, and the cowardly defeats which lead to eternal servitude. Feeble as we always are at the entrance upon life, surrounded by the thousand dangers which besiege infancy and make so many their victims, the principle of divine life, which he has received in baptism, must be unfolded, expanded, and strengthened.

This vital principle is the spirit of Jesus Christ, communicated more abundantly by the imposition of hands of the priest, and the unction of the holy chrism. That spirit, according to the promise of Jesus Christ, guards the spirit of the young christian from all error, by *teaching him all truth*,† and strengthens his heart against the assaults of vice by unfolding in it the germ of all the virtues.

Such is the *Sacrament of Confirmation*, the effect of which is to *strengthen in the faith, and to make the perfect christian*—a sacrament which realizes the promise of Jesus Christ, to give his disciples the Spirit, the Comforter—a promise which St. Peter understands as extended to all christians‡—a sacrament which we find the Apostles administering after baptism, and which St. Paul very distinctly mentions.§

The permanent union of the Christian with Jesus Christ is especially cemented and elevated to its highest perfection, by the eucharistic bread, that centre of spiritual light and heat. There the Author of life himself, entering in person into our souls, unites himself as closely to them by love, as he is united by nature to the divine persons. *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, abideth in me, and I in him. . . . As I live by the Father, so he that eateth me lives by me.*||

* Matth. iii. ult.—Ps. xc. 11. † John xvi. 13. ‡ Act. Ap. ii. 38.

§ Ibid. viii. 17.—xix. 6.—II. Cor. i. 21. || John vi. 57.

Are these various ties which connect the christian soul with God, destroyed by the slow or sudden eruption of the never wholly extinguished fires of concupiscence? and does the soldier of Christ, invulnerable while united to his Chief, receive a mortal wound from the assaults of his passions? See him pierced with grief and shame at the feet of the spiritual physician, to whom Christ has given the power to cure all the infirmities, and heal all the wounds of the soul. The dying gladiator, re-animated by divine strength, rises at these consoling words: "Go, my brother, in peace, and repair this defeat by new triumphs." This is the *Sacrament of Penance, instituted for the remission of sins committed after baptism; a difficult baptism, according to the Holy Fathers; a plank of safety offered to the shipwrecked, a very necessary plank; for who has been able to traverse the sea of the world without suffering shipwreck from the sudden whirlwind of the passions!*

Our Christian arrives at an age when he is to choose the companion of his life, the angel to whom he will offer his hand for the journey towards the eternal country at the head of a more or less numerous family. Religion presides with maternal solicitude, over this act, so often decisive for the temporal and eternal life. It is in his Heavenly Father's house that it is celebrated, far from those passions which would not fail to break the tie which they themselves had formed.—This is the *sacrament of marriage destined to sanctify the legitimate union of man and woman; a sacrament truly great in Christ and in the Church, as St. Paul expresses it.**

Does the young Christian, instead of dividing his heart by uniting himself to a wife,† feel moved to consecrate it entire to the Lord and to the spiritual good of his brethren; does he hear a celestial voice which says to him: *Leave all and follow after me; I will make thee a fisher of men?*‡ After

* Ephes. v. 32.

† I. Cor. vii. 33.

‡ Matth. iv. 19.

long conflicts and slow and measured steps towards the high places of the sanctuary, behold him ready to ascend the last steps of the altar. 'The Pontiff' surrounded with his priests, covers with his hands the head of the Levite and invokes the treasures of the Holy Spirit, the sanctifier, on this new dispenser of the Divine mysteries, and by Holy unction he prepares his hands for the battles of our Lord. This is the *Sacrament of Ordination, which confers the power of filling the ecclesiastical functions, and the grace to exercise them in a holy manner.*

Finally, whether priest or simple believer, the Christian approaches the end of his career, and confined to the bed of pain, he hears already the footsteps of the inexorable judge who leaves no fault without its punishment. On the other hand, Satan seeing the end of the combat approaching, summon's the infernal legions, and profiting by the decay of nature, assails him furiously. What is to be done? *Let the priests be summoned, said the Apostle St. James, and let them pray over the sick man, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer of faith shall save the sick man, and the Lord shall raise him up, and if he be in sins they shall be forgiven him.** This is what the Church does in the *Sacrament of Extreme Unction, established for the spiritual and corporal consolation of the sick.*

This last purification terminated, the Church confidently says to her child: "*Go forth, Christian soul!*"

Death which dissolves the ties of flesh and blood, respects those of Catholic charity and seems even to bind them more closely. The Church believes and teaches, according to the tradition of all time, which is perfectly conformable to Scripture and the light of reason, that beyond this world, between the frightful abyss into which impenitent crime descends forever, and the happy abode open to souls without stain, there

* James v. 14, 15.

exists a place of temporary suffering, where, according to the words of Jesus Christ, Divine justice demands even to the last farthing its dues for faults committed in the journey through life.*

The Church also believes and teaches, according to the doctrine of the transfer of merits and penalties, upon which all Christianity rests, that the prayers, sacrifices and good works of the living may propitiate God in favor of the victims of purgatory, and abridge their sufferings. Thus has this tender mother given a large space to the dead in her Liturgy: by recalling them incessantly to the remembrance of her children, she at the same time engages these last to extend their charity beyond the tomb, and keep themselves from the least taint of sin.

The only departed ones for whom the Catholic does not pray, but whose powerful intercession, on the contrary he invokes, are those heroic souls whom the voice of the people, confirmed by the miraculous voice of heaven has determined the Church, after rigid formalities, to propose to the veneration, invocation, and holy emulation of her children.

This magnificent system of restoration, of which I have given only a very incomplete sketch, Protestantism has disowned and almost entirely destroyed. Her sacrilegious attacks are principally directed against the adorable Eucharist, the Sacrament of Penance, Ordination and the Worship of the Saints. Let us vindicate these admirable institutions from the brutalities of ignorance. But first we must say a few words concerning the primitive theories of Protestantism concerning sin, justification and the sacraments.

* Matth. v. 25.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THEORY OF THE FIRST REFORMERS CONCERNING SIN.—JUSTIFICATION.—GOOD WORKS.—THE SACRAMENTS.

ORIGINAL sin, which the Catholic Church attributes to the voluntary weakness of man and the artifice of the seducer, Luther, Zwingle and Calvin had the temerity to attribute to the will of the thrice Holy God.

Frequently in his book on Free Will and in many other productions, the evangelist of Wittemberg declaims against moral liberty as a human invention cherishing self-love; and he attempts to establish christian humility upon that principle of fatalism, that God “by an immutable, eternal and infallible will regulates, plans and does all things,” that, passive instruments of this sovereign will, “all that we do, it is not freely, but by pure necessity that we do it.”*

The mild and gentle Melancthon at first very warmly sustained this oracle of the fiery apostle, and inveighed against the Catholic theologians whom he accused of having *borrowed from philosophy and imported into Christianity the impious doctrine of liberty, a doctrine absolutely opposed to Scripture.* It is also, *to the philosophy of Plato, according to him that we are indebted for the equally pernicious word, reason.*†

Zwingle, in his brutal book *On Providence*, repeats at every page that God leads and forces man into evil; that he makes use of the creature to produce injustice, and that yet he does not sin; for the law which makes an act sinful does not exist for God, and moreover he always acts from right and supremely holy intentions. The creature, on the contrary, although acting involuntarily under the Divine

* De Servo arbit. opp. ed. Jen. vol. iii. p. 170, 177.

† Loc. Theol. ed Aug. 1821. p. 10.

guidance sins because he violates the law and acts from damnable motives.*

As to Calvin, it is well known, that as a consequence of his favorite dogma of absolute predestination, by which God from all eternity has irrevocably devoted some to goodness and eternal happiness, and others to evil and eternal misery, has filled his *Christian Institutes* with such beautiful assertions as the following, that, *for reasons incomprehensible to our ignorance, God irresistibly impels man to violate his laws, that his inspirations turn to evil the heart of the wicked, that man falls, because God has thus ordered it.*

The mellifluous Theodore of Beza, second Pope of the Genevese Church, goes farther still, and wishing to explain absolute predestination, which Calvin had taught as an incontrovertible but profoundly mysterious dogma, he boldly affirms that God has created the largest portion of men only with the object of making use of them to do evil; and then gives as a reason for it, that God, in the creation of the universe, designed to manifest his justice and his mercy; but how could this end be attained with creatures who remaining innocent, would need no pardon, nor merit any punishment! God then ordains that they should sin; he saves some, and here his compassion is seen; he condemns others, and behold his justice. The end that God proposes to himself is evidently just and holy; consequently the means must be the same.†

According to such a system what is the action of justification and spiritual regeneration except a mechanical movement of man under the irresistible influence of God? and what must be the effect of this movement of conversion? is it as has hitherto been believed casting off the degradation of sin,

* De Providentiâ, opp. vol. i. p. 355. See Moehler, *Symbolism* vol. i. ch. i.

† Absters, Calumn Heshus, Adv. Calvin. Moehler, *Symbolism* vol. i. p. 35.

freeing oneself from the tyranny of passion, and the corrupt love of creatures, and following in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and in the way of his commandments? Not so; that would have been, according to the Reformers, to make man the author of his justice, and bring to naught the merits of Jesus Christ, by the power of which alone we are justified. The justice which renders us holy and agreeable to God is not in us, but out of us; it is the justice of Jesus Christ which is imputed to us, and which, leaving the soul still sullied, covers it as with a mantle. God closes his eyes upon our inward condition, that vile receptacle where all the vices rage to rest them with complacency upon his Son, who extends the veil of his merits over this frightful sink of corruption.

But how can the sinner shelter himself under this Divine mantle? By faith, and faith alone, answer the Reformers. It must be observed, however, that this justifying faith is not what is commonly understood by faith, belief in revealed truths; but it is the certain faith that we are just and holy. "The sinner," says Luther, "must believe in his justification with the same faith with which he believes that Jesus Christ came into the world . . . Cursed be he who does not place himself among the number of the saints! Believe, and henceforth you are as holy as St. Peter."*

But, what become of good works, the practice of virtue, and the observance of the divine commandments, the only way, according to Jesus Christ, which leads to life?† These are troublesome superfluities, of which christian liberty must rid us. Rather, according to Luther, they are invincible obstacles to salvation, if one places the least reliance upon them. "Faith alone," said he, "is necessary for our justification: nothing else is commanded or forbidden. Do not say that God will punish sin. The law, in truth, says so; but

* Opp. vol. i. prop. 15, 18.

† Matth. xix. 17.

what have I to do with the law? I am free. . . . There is only one unpardonable sin, unbelief. . . . The way to heaven is narrow," adds the sacrilegious jester; "if you wish to pass through it, throw away your good works."*

"Those pious souls," he says farther, "who do good to gain the kingdom of heaven, not only will never succeed, but they must even be reckoned among the impious; and it is more important to guard them against good works than against sin."†

"Be a sinner, and sin boldly," he writes to a friend, from the Patmos of Warthburg; "but, believe yet more boldly, and rejoice in Jesus Christ, the conqueror of sin, of death, and the world. We must sin so long as we are here below. This life is not the abode of justice. It is sufficient that, by the riches of the glory of God, we know the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world. Hence, sin cannot separate us from Jesus Christ, even if, in one day, we should commit a hundred thousand murders, and a hundred thousand adulteries."‡

To the certainty of justification by faith, Calvin added the certainty of salvation in the justified man; so that every true Christian must believe, with an unwavering faith, that he could never again lose, even by the greatest crimes, the friendship of God, and his right to the celestial inheritance. The synod of Dort professed solemnly this doctrine, so favorable for criminals, and sustained it by the spiritual thunders of excommunication, in the age of Bossuet, Fenelon, Grotius, and Leibnitz.§

It is necessary to have before our eyes the incontrovertible testimony of history, and the works of the leading reformers,

* Galat. ch. ii. De Captiv. Babyl., chap. de Bapt. Serm. de Nov. Test.

† Opp. Wittemb., vol. vi. p. 160.

‡ Ep. of Martin Luther, &c. *Symbolism*, vol. i. p. 165.

§ See *Histoire de Variations*.

edited by Protestant hands, to believe in the existence of such horrors. We can easily perceive that Luther, Calvin, and, above all, their disciples, must have been obliged afterward to veil such baseness, and revive the obligation, at first so brutally denied, of the moral law. But what power had such feeble palliatives against the fundamental doctrine of justification by faith alone! And fatalism, introduced by the extinction of free will and absolute predestination, would be ready to lend a strong hand to the passions, and justify the greatest excesses.

Do we not still see the new Methodistic Calvinism move heaven and earth to bring these horrible doctrines into repute? The Methodist pulpits of England and the United States resounded, not long since, with these oracles of the preacher Hill: "If I should sin more grievously than Manasseh, I should be still a child of grace; for God always regards me as Jesus Christ. Art thou plunged, my soul, in crime? Art thou red with homicidal blood? It matters not. Thou art all beauty, my lover, my faithful spouse; thou art without stain. I am not among those who say: Let us sin, that grace may abound; but it is no less certain, on that account, that adultery, incest, and murder, will render me more holy on the earth, and happier in heaven."*

In a word, Geneva shows us the ministers of her petrified Church always dabbling in the infected mire of Calvin, and exhuming from it this vile maxim, that *Christ*, by attaching himself to the cross, has conquered liberty of mind, heart, and body.†

It may be easily imagined, that such doctrines took from the sacraments their efficacy and importance. What advan-

* Moehler, *Symbolism*, book ii., ch. iii., vol. ii., p. 299.

† This is the favorite dogma of Dr. Malan. (See his *Lettre d'un Protestant à un Catholique de Verscix. Les Adieux à Rome, de l'Apostat Bruitte.*)

tage from these divine channels, destined to conduct into the soul the grace and the blood of Jesus Christ, if this soul is condemned to remain impure, and without activity in the cause of goodness? Consequently, the Reformers, after many changes, reduced the sacraments to two—baptism, a faint emblem of justification by faith, an equivocal sign of the divine covenant; and the supper, in which Luther maintained the reality of the body of Jesus Christ, in opposition to Zwingli and Calvin, who only recognised in it a type or figure.

But let us turn our eyes from the sad dreams of these apostles of falsehood, and fix them upon the ineffable *inventions of divine love*,* which the Church offers us.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE EUCHARIST, REAL PRESENCE OF JESUS CHRIST.—UNIVERSAL INFLUENCE OF THIS DOCTRINE.

THE Immanuel, the *God with us*, the thought of whom made Isaiah tremble eight hundred years before the event, and inspired him with accents so tender and so sublime;† the *truly hidden God*, whom the prophetic spirit showed him veiling the rays of his infinite Majesty, and the brilliancy of his glorious humanity, to reach more surely the weak and timid heart of man;‡ that divine *teacher, who should never flee away from the midst of his people*,§ the Catholic Church beholds him with ever new transports of admiration, gratitude, and love, dwelling in the midst of us full of grace and truth. |

* Isai. chap. xii. 4.

† Isai. chap. vii., xi., xii.

‡ Verè tu es Deus absconditus, Deus Israel salvator. (Ibid. xlv. 15.)

§ Et non faciet avolare à te ultra dectorem tuum, (Isai. xxx. 20.)

|| John i. 15.

Proud sectarians, whose errors she has confounded, tyrants who have shed her blood in torrents, prophets of death, who so many times have announced her obsequies, be not surprised that she has so easily triumphed over your sophisms, wearied your executioners, and given the lie to your predictions; she has with her a God infinite in wisdom, infinite in power, infinite in duration.

But should not the language of controversy, always bitter, however fraternal it may be, expire on our lips before the altars of the Lamb!

You who, without bitterness against Catholicism, have even words of esteem and respect for it; noble and elevated souls, whose mind and heart have resisted the malignant influence of errors imbibed with the milk of infancy; it is for you that these pages are intended: they will offer you the explanation of phenomena which, for a long time, have attracted your attention.

Frequently, on visiting our ancient cathedrals, you are amazed at the sight of the varied ornaments which convert these gigantic masses into a world of artistic wonders. You admire the infinite patience of the chisel which has given life to the whole interior, from the mosaic pavement to the aerial arches springing with such boldness from their delicate mouldings, and to the exterior, from the mossy trunks of a forest of columns, to the grotesque ornaments of the roof. This profusion of the riches of art will be found more or less in almost all our churches.

Often, when present at our religious solemnities, you have been witnesses of the magic power of a worship which groups around its altars numerous populations, while the frequency and monotony of the spectacle never create disgust. The holy gravity of our ceremonies, the divine beauty of our chants, have spoken to your hearts, but have failed to explain to you the general serenity of countenance, and that religious

expression of physiognomy, which led you to say: "There are souls in these bodies, and God is in these souls.

Perhaps you have sometimes entered our churches to rest your soul, wearied with the tumult of the world, or wounded in its affections, and did you not then experience, like Rousseau, their secret power to lead to prayer, to sweet and consoling thoughts, to everything which refreshes and re-animates the heart, and disposes it to suffer patiently the disappointments of life?

You have often endeavored, perhaps, to explain to yourself that spirit of sacrifice, that self-forgetfulness, that self-devotion, so common in Catholicism, and so entirely unknown elsewhere; and you enumerated, with admiration, the multitudes of virgins who devote themselves to the sick, to the education of poor children, our Brothers of the schools, the hospitallers of St. Bernard, who have, for charity, lived eight hundred years above the habitable world. You recalled the names of our Trappists, our children of St. Bruno, of St. Francis, of Assisium, who brought back to us the angels of the Thebais. You remembered our missionaries making themselves savages with the savage, and pressing to the scaffold by the way of suffering and privations; and then you cited our priests, for the most part so separated from the joys of life, so present in all its miseries, so prodigal of life when death is knocking at every door.

Afterwards, comparing the two worships, you have said to yourself: Why are our temples so different from their churches? Why does all that is seen and practised in them leave the heart so cold? Why are our ministers so bold, when contempt and insult are to be cast on Catholic priests, and so reserved and timid when they are called upon to sit, like them, by the pillow of the dying, and converse with the infected and the irascible? Do we not adore the same God? Have we not the same Gospel? Yes, we, in truth, adore

the same God; but your fathers, deceived by wretched men, have chosen that this God, who was made man, and *whose delights were to be with men*,* should return to heaven after thirty-three years abode upon the earth, whilst the Catholic Church adores him always dwelling upon her altars, and communicating to the sheep of his flock the treasures of his divinity indissolubly united to his flesh and his blood.

Dear separated brethren, whom an invisible hand is gradually guiding back to the fold, approach the sacred tabernacles, and contemplate him whom, we are assured, you will one day receive with us. Let the poor symbols which conceal him, far from scandalizing you, remind you of the crib where he was born, of the wretched swaddling-clothes in which he was presented to kings and shepherds. He is always a humiliated God who takes his place at the lowest extremity of existence of in order to raise us to the sublime heights of the divine life.

Here, assuredly, is the central fire, which animates and quickens the Catholic world, and increases there in such abundance, in the midst of human coldness, those harvests of virtues which rejoice the earth, and fill the store-houses of the heavenly husbandman.† This is the undying centre of heat at which the genius of the artist is enkindled, from which the heart of the people, the religious, and the priest, borrows a constantly renewing ardor for great enterprises and sublime devotion.

What was it that interested, for so many years, numerous populations in the construction of those immense edifices, whose support alarms our most wealthy governments? What animated the hundred thousand indefatigable workmen who labored on the cathedral of Strasburg, and found the days too short?‡ It was this simple thought. Can we do too

* Prov. viii. 31.

† John xv. 1.

‡ See *Essais Historiques, et Topographiques, sur la Cathédrale de Strasbourg*, by M. Grandidier.

much for Him who has done so much for us? and can the edifice in which he condescends daily to renew the prodigies of his mercy, ever be worthy of his love and our gratitude?

The Church, for the Catholic, is not only the place for religious assemblies; it is, indeed, *the tabernacle of God among men**—the heaven on earth, the point of contact, the common meeting place of angels, saints, and men, around their divine Head and the august Trinity.

Hence, with what indescribable ardor and patience the religious artist of the middle ages devoted himself to the decoration of the sanctuary, two steps from the altar, under the eye of the Divine Redeemer, who counts the drops of sweat as they fell from his brow, and records in the book of life every stroke of the chisel! Be no longer surprised to see the marble become pliant in his hands, and lend itself, with the flexibility of metal and the suppleness of silk, to the brilliant conceptions of his imagination, shaping itself into leaves and flowers, into lace and embroidery, with grace and freshness, and charming delicacy.

You have, also, before your eyes the divine Enchanter, who, at the first stroke of the bell, brings joyfully crowding around the altar our still faithful population.

You will not deny that the God whom love confines within our tabernacles must be benevolent, and dear to the hearts of the faithful! He is not the abstract, incomprehensible God of philosophy. He is not God individualising himself in each one by the reading of the Bible, a Being as manifold, as various, as grotesque as the brains where he is moulded. He is not even the historical God-Man, seated upon the invisible throne of the heavens, and whom the Gospel describes as suffering for us eighteen hundred years ago, a vast distance for our mind and heart so forgetful of the past, so little moved by what they cannot touch! This God is *God with*

* *Ponam tabernaculum meum in medio vestri.* (Levit. xxvi. 11.)

us, the God of all and each, of great and small, of cities and hamlets. He dwells equally in the sumptuous temples which kings rear for him, the rustic church which the peasant prepares for him, or the tent of green branches in which the savage adores him. A Father of ineffable tenderness he is everywhere, where he sees two or three of his children assembled in his name.*

He is God—the shepherd whom David sang in an idyl of divine beauty, *leading his sheep on the paths of justice, along tranquil waters, animating them by his presence, encouraging them by the power of his crook; in the dangerous defiles, preparing them a table, a delicious nourishment, in the desert of life; anointing their heads with precious oil, and putting no limits to his loving solicitude to bring them to the fold, where an eternity of repose awaits them.*†

If in his Eucharistic life as in the days of his mortal life, Jesus Christ is too much neglected and forgotten by the happy in this world, how is it he, on the other hand, comprehended and loved by the simple and religious visiter, who has seen him visit and console on his death-bed his grandparents and his parents, whom he sees with compassion descending into the heart of his children to strengthen their youthful virtue, and who so often has himself calmed his soul, at the sacred banquet! See him anticipating the dawn in the field to resume the hard-labor which will end only with the day: perhaps he turns his eye with envy towards the baronial mansion where the repose of the day succeeds the sleep of the night, but the sound of the matin bell summons him to salute the mother of God, and repeat these words: *The word was*

* Ubi enim sunt duo vel tres congregati in nomine meo, ibi sum in medio eorum. (Matth. xviii. 20.)

† Dominus regit me, et nihil mihi derit, &c. (Ps. xxii.) This delicious picture, and a multitude of others that are found in the prophets, are a *sealed book* for sheep deprived of the *real presence* of the shepherd

made flesh and dwelt among us! The thought of God gaining a support for thirty years by the sweat of his brow, and watching day and night in the village church, changes the current of his ideas and increases his strength tenfold. The sun rises, and the power of its rays joined to the burden of toil brings down the thoughts of the good laborer to earth again. The bell sounds anew and announces that the priest is ascending to the altar: the Christian uncovers his head, crosses himself and says: Behold the innocent Lamb that was slain for my sins; and I, mean sinner, shall I refuse to unite my sweat to his blood!

How happy in the midst of his trials is the Catholic who is nourished by faith! Everything recalls to him the infinite tenderness of God who has made himself the companion of his exile and his fellow citizen. Every day he sees him borne to the bedside of the sick. There is no by-path, no house that has not been sanctified by his presence. The whole parish is a Holy Land, a Palestine where the Man-God has dwelt for ages, where he has incessantly preached patience, resignation, charity and the pursuit of Heaven, where he still brings thousands of the dead to life, and heals all manner of diseases.

It, indeed, belongs to Catholics to say: *There is not and there never has been any nation who can boast of having Gods as familiar as ours.** And let it not be imagined that this familiarity ever diminishes respect and love. It is for man, in the depth of his weakness and misery, to withdraw himself from a too penetrating scrutiny, if he would escape contempt. God is despised only by those who are ignorant of him and flee from him. Adored and loved in proportion as he is known, he is surrounded by a reverence and love without limits, where he is seen without a cloud.

* *Nec est alia natio tam grandis, quæ habeat deos appropinquantes sibi, sicut Deus noster adest cunctis obsecrationibus nostris.* (Deuter. iv. 7.)

But if the people can drink joyfully full draughts from the fountains of life which the love of the Savior everywhere opens,* what must it be with the priest, the instrument of such prodigies! will he, through whose hands daily flows the blood of his celestial victim, ever find that he can do enough for souls purchased at so great a price! If he retreats before the awful solemnity of the Divine ministry, will he not believe himself obliged to go into the desert to pray for pastors and people, and to teach both to raise the soul by prayer and to conquer the flesh by mortification?

Among so many sacrifices, is it remarkable that many leave the altar and tear themselves from us to go and exhaust themselves by toil and privations under the burning sun of Africa or India, in the forests of America or in the midst of the Anthropophagi of Polynesia; that others go to Tonquin, Cochin-China and Corea to fill the places of their brethren who have been strangled, decapitated, burned before a slow fire, or who have fallen, hewn to pieces under the sword of their persecutors? Intrepid apostles, we justly honor you; but it is just also that you should despise yourselves, when measuring your steps by those of your Divine Master, you see him traverse the awful distance from the eternal throne to the manger, coming forth from the work-shop of Nazareth to ascend Calvary, and only quitting the tomb to imprison himself in our tabernacles!

This is the perpetual devotion which inspires and exalts all devotion, and protects our heroes from the poison of pride by convicting them all of weakness and cowardice. It is this which inspired St. Francis Xavier, when expiring on the coast of Sancian, after unheard-of labors and success. What am I, alas! my Lord, but a vile and useless servant!

* *Haurietis aquas in gaudio de fontibus Salvatoris.* (Isa. xii. 3.) The rest of the chapter is a still more visible allusion to the Eucharistic mystery.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

PERPETUITY OF FAITH IN THE REAL PRESENCE.—INVENTORS OF THE FIGURATIVE PRESENCE.—CONTRADICTION AND DISHONESTY OF THE SACRAMENTARIANS.

It may be said, "We allow that the real presence is a touching belief and has wonderful power over the heart, but can the mind accept it?" How can a just mind consent to deprive the human heart, a prey to so many sorrows and subject to so many frailties of so divine a balm, of so efficacious a source of strength! Is not the well authenticated power of the remedy, a strong proof, to every judicious mind of its divine origin? How long since, and from whom did error receive her commission to benefit man and lead him to God!

I readily acknowledge that this dogma, considered in itself, is strange, inconceivable and even incredible; but what should we conclude from that? That it is not of human invention, that only the Divine voice could announce to man a thing so unimaginable, and make it accepted.—The first visionary who should dream of such an extravagance could not have found a second to adopt it; and if such had been found, universal opinion would have given him and his fellow believers the first rank in the history of human follies.

Let those who consider this doctrine as absurd explain, then, how the christian world has believed it for sixteen centuries, and still believes it with very few exceptions. Is reason a Calvinistic creation! As to sense and genius, our old Christians have established their claims to them, as well as the Catholics of modern times. To deny them reason would be to want it oneself.

If this doctrine were not as clearly stated in the Gospel, as in fact it is, its divine origin would be no less satisfactorily

demonstrated by the uniform and constant faith of Christians of all ages, from those who had the happiness to hear those words uttered by the mouth of the Savior on the evening of his death: *Receive and eat, this is my body*, &c., even to the Christians of the sixteenth century, who, not without surprise, heard Cartstadt and Zwingli translate thus the words of Christ: *This is the figure of my body*. This belief, the Oriental Churches who have been separated from Catholicism since the fifth and the ninth century, have carefully preserved till our day, as has been proved to the sacramentarians with a force of erudition which has reduced them to silence.*

If the peaceable and immemorial possession of a doctrine so popular, and concerning which every believer must necessarily have a fixed and established faith, was disturbed for a moment, in the eleventh century, at only one point of the Church, the attempt of Berenger, only more fully confirmed the universal harmony, and the teacher in the schools of St. Martin of Tours, hastened to abjure an opinion whose novelty provoked the anathemas of pastors and people.†

As to those miserable journalists, strangers to all knowledge of men and history who dare yet to assert that faith in the real presence was imposed on the Catholic Church by a monk of Mount Sinai or of the convent of Corbie, between the seventh and ninth centuries, or even by a religious of the thirteenth, I hold them as irrefutable as those ancient geolo-

* It is sufficient to name the great work *De la Profondeur de la foi de l'Eucharistie*, on the subject of which Leclercq wrote. † Distinguished learned men have recently demonstrated that all the churches of the world, with the exception of those that are called *reformed*, and others which by their innovations have gone farther than the *reformed*, at the present day admit the real presence of the body of Christ: it has been proved, I repeat, by such evidence, that this fact must be acknowledged as established, or we can never hope to prove any assertion with regard to foreign countries. (*Système de Theol.*, art. *Euchar.*)

† See Berger, *Dictionn. Theol.* art. *Berengarianus*

gists who taught that the universe was brought forth from a crocodile's egg.

The two men to whom it was given to tear from the heart of many millions of christians this ancient and touching belief, were Carlstadt and Zwingle; the first Archdeacon of Wittemberg—a barbarian, without talent, without faith, destitute even of common sense, living in intoxication among pots and glasses, as Melancthon has said;* the other, an old curate of Glacis and Einsiedlen, from which he was banished on account of misconduct.† They were the first to applaud the invectives of Luther against the indulgences of the Roman Pontiff; the first also, who, using the very plenary indulgence accorded by the Pope of Wittemberg to his priests, transformed their maid-servants into wives.

If this wonderful effect of the love of Jesus Christ must be denied, what more natural than that it should be by such men! The unhappy man who dares to approach the altar with impure heart and hands, is peculiarly interested to find on the altar only an insignificant image of what we adore there.

However this may be, the commentary which Zwingle gave of the words of the Eucharistic institution, was a little less absurd than the burlesque interpretation of Carlstadt, which threw Luther into fits of laughter, and drew down on its author a deluge of burning sarcasm.‡

* See Audin, *Vie de Calvin*, vol. i. ch. xxii.

† Ib.—De Haller, *Histoire de la Reforme Protestante dans le Suisse occidentale*, ch. iii.

‡ See Audin, as above quoted. Carlstadt thus explained the supper: Jesus Christ, after saying to his Apostles, when giving them bread: *Take and eat*, pointed to himself, saying: *This is my body*; then passing the cup of wine, inviting them to drink, he probably showed them his arteries and veins, saying: *This is my blood*, &c.!!! Here is a charming application of the principle of individual interpretation.

Discomfited by Luther, who armed himself with the express words of Jesus Christ, and also with universal tradition, which he considered decisive, when it was favorable to himself, Carlstadt and Zwingle found an aid in Calvin, who endeavored at first to reconcile, by his hybrid doctrines, Lutheran realism with Zwinglian symbolism,* and finally decided in favor of the latter.

Luther, who so bravely defended the reality of the body and blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, was, however, in despair at finding himself agreeing on this point with those Papists, whose name alone whitened his lips with foam. He then denied transubstantiation, and maintained that the bread and the wine remained on the altar after the consecration, conjointly with the body and blood. For these words: *this is my body*, the pure and simple acceptance of which he preached so strongly to the Zwinglians; he, in fact, substituted the following: *With this, or under this, or in this is my body*.

It belonged to the sixteenth century to decide between these three masters: the Son of God affirming, of the Eucharistic bread, that *it is his body*; Luther pronouncing that *it contains his body*; and again, Carlstadt, Zwingle, and Calvin, teaching that *it is only the image, the type of the body*.† Is it aston-

It is however to this profound commentator that the Sacramentarians, that is to say, three-quarters of the Protestants, are indebted for the dogma of the figurative presence.

* See Bossuet, *Histoire des Variations*, liv. ix.

† A painter of that period had the happy idea of uniting the three suppers on the same canvass. In the centre the divine Savior was represented distributing the sacred bread to the Apostles, and uttering these words: *This is my body*; on the right, a little lower, Luther administering the supper to his followers, saying: *This contains my body*; on the left Calvin, in the same act, murmuring: *This is the type of my body*. In the back ground the artist wrote in large letters: *Which of the three speaks the truth?* This picture caused many con-

ishing, that, of two hundred and sixty millions of christians, then existing, more than two hundred millions have decided to hold to the words of Christ, as the christian world had hitherto understood them!

I have no intention to bring forward here the passages of Scripture and the monuments of tradition which establish the real presence as an eminently scriptural and christian doctrine. It would be impossible for me to add anything to the very complete demonstrations of our theologians and controversialists;* and to collect them, a volume would be needed. I shall limit myself to one reflection on the singular conduct of the theologians of the Reformation.

For three entire centuries they enforce upon us the necessity of referring, in matters of faith, not to old traditions, but to *Scripture, to the pure word of Christ*. They are continually repeating to us, as a Jewish Rabbi would do these words of Moses: *You shall not add, nor take away from the word that I speak to you.*†

Catholics take them literally. It is Christ himself, who, on the occasion of the miraculous multiplication of the loaves, speaks of the far more miraculous food that he is preparing for his disciples. The people whom he has just exhorted to believe in him as in the ambassador of God, judge that the versions. The truth, indeed, is never more eloquent than when reduced to its simplest expression. A few years later the artist would have been able to crowd his canvass with a hundred and ninety-eight other personages; for in the time of Bellarmine, two hundred different interpretations of the words of the supper could be enumerated among Protestants.

* Among the moderns I shall mention here only those of our controversialists who appear to me to have included the most in the fewest pages. *Lettres du P. Scheffmacher*, 6th and 7th. *Discussion amicale*, by Mgr. le Pape de Trevern, *Lettres* 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th. *Lectures on the Church*, by Dr. Wiseman, 11, 15, 16. *Guide du Catechumene Vaudois*, by Mgr. Charvaz, tom. iii. *Entretiens*, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th.

† Deuter. iv. 2.

miracle which they have just witnessed, and which was performed for their benefit, cannot be compared to the prodigies by which Moses subdued the Israelites to the faith; and, as it were, they challenge the Savior: *What dost thou work which approaches what our fathers have seen, who did eat manna in the desert, and to whom Moses gave bread from heaven.** Jesus denies at first that Moses gave them the true bread from heaven, and, after having affirmed, at length, that he is the true bread descended from heaven to give life unto man, he plainly tells them that *this heavenly bread, which he will give to eat, is his flesh, which he will sacrifice for the life of the world.†*

This is not intended to signify, the Calvinists will say, literally the eating of Jesus Christ, but the firm belief in the virtue of the sacrifice of his flesh; it is this which gives life to the soul.

Now the people of Capharnaum, understanding these words as the Catholics understand them, as signifying the real eating of the flesh of Jesus Christ, were shocked by such an assertion. Jesus, far from removing the scandal by having recourse to the Calvinistic commentary, only increased it by these words: *Amen, amen, I say unto you: Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you shall not*

* John vi. 29 et seq.

† John vi. 52. I would urge the reader to follow attentively the dialogue of Jesus Christ with the people of Capharnaum. He will see that Christ, accepting, if I may so express it, the challenge of the latter, pledges himself to give to all those who shall believe in him, a food far more miraculous than that which Moses had given to the Israelites in the desert. Now how could he have accomplished his promise by the institution of the Calvinistic supper? Which would exhibit the most power and testify the most love for his people, Christ inviting his disciples to eat a bit of bread, and drink a drop of wine in memory of him, or Moses causing the food of two millions of men to rain from heaven for forty years.

*have life in you. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed: and my blood is drink indeed;** and the divine Master, who sees this innumerable people, and even his disciples, with the exception of the Apostles, indignantly withdrawing from him, no less than three times repeats these words, which they were unable to bear.†

Let us now listen to the objection of the Calvinists. Some will say to us: This had no connection with the supper, and must be understood of faith in Christ. *If you do not eat the flesh, if you do not drink my blood,* should be translated: *If you do not believe in the sacrifice on the cross of the flesh and blood, &c., you will not have life. My flesh is meat indeed, translate: My flesh is metaphorically meat.* Others will tell you: These words may relate to the Eucharistic institution, but then translate thus: *If you do not eat the type of the flesh, if you do not drink the type of the blood, &c.*

Let us transport ourselves to the supper-room. Jesus Christ celebrated the last passover with his Apostles, and he distributed to them the Eucharistic species, saying: *This is my body, this is my blood.* And the reformed theologians, reforming the words of Christ, force him to say: *This represents my body, this represents my blood.*

St. Paul, writing to the Christians of Corinth, said to them: *The chalice of benediction, which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ, and the bread which we break, is it not the partaking of the body of the Lord?‡* And the Calvinists add: *communion through faith, participation through faith, &c.*

In the next chapter, St. Paul, after relating the institution of the Eucharist, declares that *he who eats this bread, and*

* John vi. 54, 55, 56.

† John vi. 57, 58, 59.

‡ I. Cor. x. 16.

drinks this chalice, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of Jesus Christ; and he invites every one to descend into his conscience before touching this bread and this chalice; for, he adds, *Whosoever eateth or drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment to himself, not discerning the body of the Lord.** And here, too, the interpreters of the Reformation heap commentaries upon commentaries, to prove to us that these words do not, by any means, imply the real presence in the supper of the body and blood of the Lord. Is it not plain, indeed, that the Calvinist who has the misfortune to swallow a morsel of bread and a drop of wine in the temple, without having justifying faith, is a monster as frightful as he who outrages and crushes under foot the real body and blood of the Son of God?

In the midst of these murmurs of the faithless disciples and their scandalous efforts to falsify or pervert the words of Christ, what is the course of the Catholics? like the Twelve Apostles, they listen to Jesus Christ and are silent; if they are interrogated, they answer with St. Peter: *Lord, thou hast the words of eternal life; we believe, because we know that thou art the Christ, the Son of God.†*

I appeal to every honest man: on which side are found the believers in the pure word of the Gospel? on which side the sacrilegious cavillers who torture it in a thousand ways and encumber it with the most absurd explanations to extort from it the contrary of what it declares?

* I. Cor. xi. 27 et seq.

† Respondit ergo ei Simon Petrus: Domine ad quem ibimus? Verba vitæ æternæ habes. Et nos credidimus et cognovimus quia tu es Christus Filius Dei. (John vi. 69, 70.)

CHAPTER XL.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE POSSIBILITY OF THE REAL PRESENCE.—ANALOGOUS MYSTERIES IN THE NATURAL ORDER.

IN order to justify such complicated and absurd commentaries on the signification of words so simple and so clear, the advocates of the figurative sense never fail to insist on the alleged absurdity which the literal sense would involve. How can we imagine Jesus Christ inclosed in a small wafer and in each of its visible parts, present simultaneously on a hundred thousand altars and constantly occupied with changing bread into his body and wine into his blood!

How!—this, also, the people of Capharnaum asked and the unbelieving disciples,* more excusable than those Calvinists who still believe that Jesus Christ is the same eternal Word who spoke and the heavens and the earth were created.

These difficulties are not of yesterday: they also presented themselves to the minds of the early Fathers of the Church, St. Ambrose, St. Hilary, St. Cyril, St. Jerome and St. Augustine; but instead of shaking their faith, they only led them still more to admire in the adorable *food given by the God of Mercy to those who fear him, the magnificent completion of the Divine prodigies.*†

St. Gregory, of Nyssa, and St. John Chrysostom asked, “How can this one body, being distributed to thousands of the faithful, be entire in each one, and remain entire in itself; how can Jesus Christ be offered in so many different places at the same time; the identity of the victim, and the unity

* Quomodo potest hic nobis carnem suam dare ad manducandum?—Durus est hic sermo, et quis potest eum audire? (John vi. 53 61.)

† Memoriam fecit mirabilium suorum misericors et miserator Dominus; escam obedit timentibus se. (Ps. cx. 4, 5.)

of the sacrifice not being injured by this diversity and multiplicity.*

There is no objection, even to that of which J. J. Rousseau boasts so absurdly in his *Lettre à l'Archeveque de Paris*, which St. Jerome and St. Augustine have not very plainly seen. The former asks us to admire Jesus Christ *seated at the banquet of his sacred body, himself eating and being eaten there*; † the other speaks to us of the *unheard of prodigy* by which the Savior at the Supper held and carried his body in his own hands. ‡

What led these great men to believe things so incredible . . . the power of that Divine word which having called into existence substances that were not, can very well change one substance into another. They, in their turn asked those who questioned how wine could become the blood of Christ, how water could be changed into wine at the marriage of Cana. They asked of those who were astonished to see the body of Jesus Christ inclosed in so narrow a space, how the Infinite Word could be confined in the womb of the Virgin. They opposed miracle to miracle, mystery to mystery, and proved that it was necessary to admit everything or reject everything. In fact there is no difficulty in the real presence and transubstantiation, which the deist could not discover in the Incarnation, Trinity, &c.; and the deist brings nothing against the mysteries of Christianity, which the atheist could not bring against the profound mystery of an Eternal and Infinite God. Cecil, in the *Octavius* of Minutius Felix, considered as incredible the existence of a being, curious even to impertinence, who wishes to see everything and understand everything and who by his omnipresence is necessarily found in many places which the honest man would wish to avoid.§

* St. Greg. Nyss., *Orat. Catech.*, chap. 37.—St. John Chrys., *Homil. in Ep. ad Hebr.*

† Ep. ad Hedibiam.

‡ Ps. in *Psalm xxxiii.*

§ Octav. § x.

The chain of our ignorance is far reaching. He who would believe only what he can comprehend, will believe nothing; for everywhere there is mystery. It is the part of fools to find incomprehensible things only in religion.

Doubtless it will be said, that the Holy Fathers were liberal in their transactions with God and that not knowing as we do the inviolable limit which Divine power encounters in the essence of matter, they dealt freely in physical impossibilities. I should be very desirous to know what modern science has taught us really new concerning the essence of bodies and their immutable relations with space. Show me the limit where matter can say to the Creator: *Thus far shalt thou come, but no farther.**

He who has long sought to comprehend what is really primitive and incomprehensible in matter will find the circle of physical impossibilities singularly contracted, while that of ignorance becomes immeasurably expanded.

With regard to acquired science and philosophical penetration, I do not imagine that even among our adversaries many pretend to be superior to their fellow believer Leibnitz; and yet this great man has told us that after four years of profound meditation on the subject which occupies us, he has been brought to acknowledge that "God can cause the substance of the same body to be at the same time in many separate places or what amounts to the same thing exist under many species."†

Let those who find so much difficulty in the idea that the smallest visible portion of a wafer contains the body of Christ, explain to us how God has inclosed in a small black grain, ten thousand of which would not fill your hand, a gigantic tree, or rather an innumerable quantity of those

* Job xxxviii. 11.

† *Système Théolog.*, art. *Euchar.*—*Pensées de Leibnitz. Lettres à Arnaud.*

trees; for there is not a pine of our forest which could not in time cover the globe with its kind.

Let those who do not comprehend how the uncreated sun *which enlightens every man who comes into the world*, can re-produce the material being which is united to it, in a hundred millions of persons at the same time, without injury to its numerical unity, explain to us how the same luminous rays which proceed from the sun or are put in motion by that planet, can simultaneously re-produce its image in innumerable reflectors and yet the integrity and identity of the image remain unbroken by their number? These things are very different, it will be said. Yes, they are different; but whoever has studied the laws of reflection without being dazzled by its technology will find that the only sensible difference between these two phenomena is that we believe the second on the testimony of the eyes without comprehending it, whilst we admit the first on the word of God without comprehending or seeing it.

It will be asked again, how the Eternal Word of God, clothed with a human body and elevated by the resurrection to its highest power, can communicate itself really, totally and simultaneously to two hundred millions of men. Let it be explained to us how the human word, being also complex, since it strikes the ear and enlightens the understanding, coming forth as it does from one mouth, can reach at the same time in its intellectual and physical identity the ear and the soul of ten thousand auditors.*

Finally, the atheist can make this objection against the *multilocation* of the body of Christ, with as much reason against the existence of God, who, because he is infinite is necessarily omnipresent without ceasing to be one. The spirituality of the Divine Being has nothing to do with the subject.

* Doubtless the youth who has learned his acoustics by heart, will laugh at the simplicity of this problem; but I propose it to those who have renewed their studies.

God is a substance, and the question is precisely whether a substance can exist simultaneously in different places.

It is evident, then, that all the objections against the real presence proves but one thing, our* ignorance of the means by which it is effected. Is this surprising? The Eucharist is, like the Incarnation of which it is the complement, the highest act of omnipotence inspired by Divine love.

CHAPTER XLI.

FUNCTIONS OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE EUCHARIST.—FUNDAMENTAL IDEA OF SACRIFICE.—ITS UNIVERSALITY.—EUCARISTIC SACRIFICE.—EFFECT OF ITS ABOLITION IN PROTESTANT WORSHIP.

THE real presence of Jesus Christ on the altar once admitted, one question arises in all minds: What does Jesus Christ in the midst of us? What can he do but continue his part of Mediator between God and man! *An eternal priest according to the order of Melchisedech,* always interceding for us*, in the bosom even of the repose and glory which he enjoys *at the right hand of the Father,†* can he be present on our altars, without fulfilling towards God, as Head of the Church, the duty of perfect adorer, and without fulfilling towards man, still stained by sin, the functions of Sanctifier and Savior?

The consequence is so plain, that the most enlightened Protestants have been obliged to admit, with Bossuet, that the whole *question of sacrifice must really be reduced to that of the real presence.‡*

Here let us raise our thoughts, and endeavor to form to

* Ps. cix. 4. † Rom. viii. 34.—Heb. vii. 25.

‡ *Exposition de la Doctrine*, &c. § xv.

ourselves a just idea of *Sacrifice*, that common foundation of all the religions of the world.

Man, the workmanship of God, is devoted and consecrated to his Author, by virtue even of his existence. The first law of his being is to adore his Creator; that is, to offer himself to him in testimony of his total dependence, and say to him: "It is through Thee, Great God, that I am all that I am; accept the offering that I make of myself, and if it please Thee to endow me with thy gifts, let me use them only for thy glory!" It is in this oblation, which refers to God the glory of his works, that the essence of religion consists, and every religious act which is not in some way connected with it, is without value before God.

This act, man in his innocence performed in his heart, and outwardly produced, without doubt, by some symbol. God, who beheld in man only the image of his own perfections, and the yet unsullied work of his own hand, accepted this offering, and corresponded to it by an increase of grace.

Man became degraded by sin. Oblation is impossible. What has he to offer to God, but a corrupted nature, the object of contempt and anger? How is this nature to be so purified as to find favor in the eye of God? By blood; for in that is concealed an expiating virtue.* Indeed, the life is in the blood,† and the loss of blood or of life is the just satisfaction which God demands from him who dares to rebel against him.‡

But what blood can cleanse the deep corruption of the soul, and the horrible injury inflicted upon the divine Majesty? That of man is too vile and impure, and, if it flowed eternally under the hand of the executioner of divine justice, he could

* Sanguis pro animæ piaculo sit. (Levit. xvii. 11.) Sine sanguinis effusione non fit remissio. (Hebr. ix. 22.)

† Anima carnis in sanguine est. (Levit. xvii. 11—alibi.)

‡ Stipendia enim peccati, mors. (Rom. vi. 23.)

never exclaim: It is enough! I pardon man; he can re-appear before me without fear.

The Word offers the blood which he has resolved to receive from a woman. The sacrifice is accepted, and is already realised in the divine intention from the beginning of the world.* Infinite compassion is waiting to apply the fruits of it to sinful man, who is instructed in the remedy which divine love is preparing for him; and the attempt of the Divine Restorer, who alone is able, by his sacrifice, to reconcile humanity with God, becomes the basis of religion among all people.†

To unite oneself to the great victim, and participate in his merits, is the rite universally practised. As man is to be rescued, it is the creature nearest to man, and the purest, who must represent the agent for humanity. All the sins of the people will be called down on his devoted head, the decree of death, which is pronounced on sin, must afterwards be executed on him. Purified by blood, the victim will appear on the altar, and will find only *sweetness* in the countenance of his God. The people, then, will *communicate*, will unite themselves to the victim by his blood, with which they are sprinkled, by his flesh, which they will incorporate with themselves, and they will be pardoned and sanctified.‡

Immolation, oblation, communion, are the three fundamental ideas which appear in the profound mystery of sacrifice.

It must be observed, that real immolation does not enter into the absolute and primitive notion of sacrifice. It supposes the unrepaired guilt of man. The blood of the victim

* Agni qui occisus est ab origine mundi. (Apoc. xiii. 8.)

† See De Maistre, *Eclaircissements sur les Sacrifices*. Schmitt, *Redemption du genre humain, annoncés par les traditions, et figurée par les sacrifices de tous les peuples*.

‡ Leviticus attests the existence of these practices among the Jews, and MM. de Maistre and Schmitt prove, in the works above quoted, that they have been in use among all nations.

is shed; because sin, always weighing upon him, demands death. Immolation precedes purification, purification precedes oblation. Possessing a victim pure, holy, and agreeable to God, and who, by virtue of his blood once shed, has fully satisfied the divine justice, you can offer him every day without shedding his blood anew. This takes place in the Eucharist. Jesus Christ, by the bloody oblation of Calvary alone, having given superabundant satisfaction, according to the Apostle, for all human iniquities,* it is no longer necessary that his blood should really be separated from the body upon our altars; it is sufficient that it be so mystically—that is to say, that the spiritual sword of the words of consecration, while separating the blood from the body only in appearance, powerfully recalls the remembrance of the sacrifice on the cross, in conformity to the precept: *Do this in memory of me. For as often as you shall eat this bread, . . . you shall show the death of the Lord.*†

The Savior being, then, on the altar, full of that life which he can no more lose,‡ is perpetually offering himself to his Father, by the ministry of the priest, in the name of the christian people who are united to him. By this infinitely pleasing oblation, he furnishes us the means of accomplishing perfectly the duty of adoration, of rendering to the Most High as much

* Unâ enim oblatione consummavit in sempiternum sanctificatos. (Heb. x. 14.)

† Luke xxii. 19.—I. Cor. xi. 26. This principle, that the essence of sacrifice consists in the *oblation*, and not in the *immolation*, radically destroys the objection that Protestants make, that *where there is no real immolation, as in the Eucharist, there can be no real sacrifice*. I do not see how theologians who maintain the necessity, not *hypothetically*, but *absolutely*, of immolation, can resolve this difficulty. In fact, if immolation is a necessary element of sacrifice, the sacrifice will correspond to the nature of the immolation; and, if this is only apparent, the sacrifice is only apparent. How can a thing vary in its absolute qualities!

‡ Christus resurgens ex mortuis jam non moritur. (Roin. vi. 9.)

glory as our crimes have taken from him, of testifying to him as much gratitude as his benefits demand, and obtaining from him as many graces as our necessities require.

At the same time that he appeases God, and disposes him to shed down upon us his blessings, Christ the Mediator is occupied with effacing and preventing our constantly recurring sins, strengthening our weakness, detaching us from ourselves, elevating us to God; and how? Let us admire here the excess of his love. By the real communication which he makes us of his flesh and his blood, united to his soul and his divinity, he enters entire into each of us, to transform us into himself. If we do not place any obstacle to the sovereignly powerful influence of his divine being, his soul assimilates our soul to itself, his flesh is incorporated with our flesh, and his blood circulates in our veins: the child of man disappears, absorbed into the Son of God. *It is not we who live, but Christ who liveth in us.** The inhabitant of earth has no reason to envy the inhabitant of Heaven, except the spectacle of the infinite good which he possesses.

What, then, is the sacrifice of the mass? It is the most animated and lively representation, the most efficacious application imaginable, of the Sacrifice of the Cross; it is its continuation through ages, in the presence of all the generations called to participate in it; it is its application to every individual. In this sacrifice which sums up his whole life—which is signified by these words: *Do this in remembrance of me*—"Jesus Christ gives us," said a profound theologian, "all that he has done for us: his immolation, objective as it was, becomes subjective, adapted to each of us individually. The Redeemer sacrificing himself for us on the Cross, is still a stranger to us; in worship, he is our own peculiar possession, our victim. There, he gave himself for all men; here, he gives himself for each of us."†

* Galat. ii. 20.

† Moehler, *Symbolism*, vol. i. p. 349.

How can I refuse to open my heart to this affecting conviction that all which Jesus Christ has done and suffered, he has done and suffered for me as if I had been alone in the world,* when I receive him entire in this minute form in which I have just seen him becoming incarnate, at the voice of his minister; inclosing himself for many days in a tabernacle less pure than the womb of Mary, suffering anew the sneers of the impious, filled with disgust for our indifference and exposing himself to fall into the mouth of the sacrilegious!

I have answered, I believe, to the reproach made against us by Protestants, of violating the glorious unity of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, opposed by St. Paul to the multitude of sacrifices of the ancient law,† and of degrading the oblation of Calvary by the daily repetition of it.

The Catholic Church has read the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews, and understands aright the texts produced, but she also attaches importance to innumerable passages of St. Paul‡ and the ancient prophets, which all imply, under the new law, the existence of an altar, of a priesthood and *a victim without stain offered in every place*,§ passages which the Protestant commentator only perverts.

The Catholic Church also believes that the greatest injury which can be done to the Sacrifice of the Cross, is to allow its memory to fade away among Christians, is to expose them to lose the fruits of it by a wholly profane life. Now, what is better adapted to prevent this evil than the pressing invitation she gives them, to be present every day, at most every eight days at the great Mystery, and there eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the august victim!

* Tradidit semetipsum pro me. (Galat. ii. 20.)

† Hebr. x. 14.

‡ I. Cor. x. 18 et seq.—Hebr. xiii. 10.

§ Isa. xix. 19.—lxvi. 2. Jerem. xxxiii. 18. Dan. vii. 11; xiii. 11. Malach. i. 10, 11. Ps. cix. 4.

The admirable efficacy of such an institution to impress on the mind and heart in characters of fire the memory of the crucified God, the deep life which it communicates to a worship, all the ceremonies of which harmonise with the *action* which is their centre; the moral omnipotence which it gives to the evangelical ministry, are all so many powerful reasons which Luther could have opposed to the wretched sophistry of his interlocutor, in the famous dialogue in which Satan succeeds in convincing him that the Mass is, *an abomination that surpasses all other abominations*.* But this man who boldly burned the bulls of Leo X. which proclaimed the doctrine of the Universal Church and who, in his *answer to Henry VIII.* wrote: "If I should have against me a thousand Cyprians and a thousand Augustins, I should deride them," that man could only listen and submit when Satan addressed him.

What have Protestants gained by yielding, like Luther, to the father of lies, against the uniform testimony of the Prophets, of Christ, the Apostles, the Holy Fathers and all christian antiquity? They, alone, among all the nations upon whom the sun has ever shone (except the Jews) *they are without an altar, without a priesthood, without a sacrifice*.† Having no longer with them him whose *powerful voice* makes our supplications penetrate even to the heart of God,‡ they have seen public prayer expiring in their religious assemblies, "and their empty and silent temples seem rather to be the sepulchres of a dead worship, than the temples of a living worship." §

* Those who are desirous of reading this ever memorable document, and who have not at hand the works of Luther, will find it extracted word for word, from the 7th vol. of his works, Wittenberg edition, in the new edition of *Lettres de Scheffmacher*, by M. Caillau, vol. iii. p. 99, et seq.

† Hose. iii. 4.

‡ *Preces supplicationesque . . . cum clamore valido et lacrymis offerens, exauditus est pro suâ reverentiâ.* (Heb. 5, 7.)

§ Wiseman, *Lecture* 5th.

CHAPTER XLII.

MORAL INFLUENCE OF JESUS CHRIST ON THE SOUL IN THE
EUCCHARIST.—VIRTUES OF WHICH HE GIVES THE
EXAMPLE.—CONNECTION OF THE EUCCHARIST
WITH PENANCE.

THE sanctifying influence which Jesus Christ exercises directly over the soul to which he unites himself in communion, is doubtless of infinite power if considered in itself; but it is limited in its effects by human will which yields or resists, at pleasure, the impulse towards sanctity, which Christ impresses upon it. The will then must be influenced, and the best means of determining it to the practice of virtue, is to realise virtue in the living lesson of example.

The sublime maxims of Jesus Christ's Sermon on the Mount* would only have produced a fruitless admiration among the children of men, if the Savior had not joined the influence which overrules the sluggishness of the heart, to the word which enlightens the mind. It was by *doing*, far more than by *teaching*, that he has determined so many souls to follow him in the difficult paths of self-denial.† But every one knows that example loses much of its efficacy in passing through the medium of history, and that virtues perceived at the distance of eighteen centuries are not sufficiently eloquent to move our hearts! It was then very necessary that the Divine model of the elect *should dwell in the midst of us full of grace and truth*, and that he should offer to each one the living picture of the same virtues which charmed the witnesses of his mortal life and attached to him so powerfully the heart of his disciples.

This need, Jesus Christ satisfies in his Eucharistic life; at the same time that he acts, if I may thus say, physically on

* Matth. v.

† Act. Ap. i. 1.

the soul by the sacramental virtue of the Communion, he acts morally on the understanding and will by the overpowering spectacle of the virtues of which he offers us the example. Let us limit ourselves to a few considerations on a subject which would demand a volume.

In order that the sinner may return to God, he must open his heart to a filial confidence in the Divine compassion and say as the prodigal child: *I will arise, and I will go and throw myself at the feet of the best of my fathers.** This is not an easy thing. The first effect of the entrance of crime into the soul is to pervert the idea of God. Instead of a Father infinitely good, more sensible of the wo of his children than of the injuries he receives from them, and always ready to pardon sincere repentance, the sinner looks upon God only as a cruel master, armed with thunderbolts. Hence that profound aversion which leads him to avoid the thought and the presence of God. Like guilty Adam, he conceals himself; † like the first fratricide, he often repels the Divine advances, and abandoned to a secret despair, he passes the rest of his days *far from the face of God.*‡

What means will infinite compassion employ to recall this fugitive, to subdue this savage? She will descend to earth and assume a body and a soul, she will take the name of *the Friend of sinners*; § and while conversing and eating with them, will entangle them in *the nets of his love.* || He is no longer the God of Sinai speaking in thunder; he is the Son of the Virgin, charming the multitude by the grace and sweetness of his words, ¶ receiving sinners with unspeakable kindness and urging them to give by their return *joy to the angels of God.*** He is the good shepherd, who leaves the ninety and nine faithful sheep to follow that which has gone

* Luke xv. 18. † Genes. iii. 8. ‡ Genes. iv. 16.

§ Luke vii. 34. || In vinculis charitatis. (Hos. xi. 4.)

¶ Luke iv. 22. ** Ibid xv. 10.

astray, and spares him the fatigue of returning by bearing him on his shoulders.*

Could Jesus Christ manifest more strikingly his unspeakable tenderness for sinners, and his ardent zeal for their salvation than he does in the adorable sacrament in which he condemns himself to remain on the earth so long as there is one soul to save?

How effectually can the infinite Divine mercy be preached, and hearts opened to receive hope before the altars where Jesus Christ resides! For one sinner who has yielded to these terrible words of the Sovereign Judge of the living and the dead: *Go, ye cursed, into everlasting fire*, how many thousands have yielded to the tender invitations of the Divine Recluse of our tabernacles: *Come to me, all ye who groan under the weight of your crimes, and I will console you!* †

After the sinner has been led to God, he must be brought to annihilate himself before that Supreme Majesty, to which he has dared to say, in the delirium of pride; *I will not obey thee*; ‡ for if God turns with indignation from him who exalts himself, he lovingly condescends to him who humbles himself.

You, who are repelled by the very word *humility* because you have never endeavored to comprehend this simple truth, that it is folly for a being, created from nothing, to attribute to himself anything, behold God concealed under the Eucharistic species.

It was, indeed, a wonderful humiliation when the Son of God was wrapped in poor swaddling clothes and laid crying in a manger! but he was an infant. It was a dreadful spectacle when the King of Kings was crushed under foot by his executioners; and expired on the infamous wood between two criminals! Yet, amid the sighs of the victim, and the blood that flowed in streams from his wounds, a living

* Luke iv. 5.

† Matth. xi. 28.

‡ Jerem. ii. 20.

body was visible. But here, the God, the man, the child, have all disappeared. There is nothing which implies life. What do we see? What we see everywhere, bread and wine: and yet only in appearance. It is mere nothingness. After that, child of earth, fallen by sin below that nothing, which is pure in the eye of God, wilt thou dare to exalt thyself!

It is by opposing his will to the supreme will that man renders himself guilty of infinite disorder. It is by resigning his will into the hands of God, and of *every creature* divinely appointed for the government of society,* that man compensates for his rebellion, re-enters into order, and offers to God the most acceptable of sacrifices, the sacrifice of himself:† for there is nothing so precious or so dear to him as his will.

To obtain from us this abnegation of self, it was not enough that the Son of God obeyed Mary and Joseph ‡ for thirty years; made himself, during his public life, the servant of all,§ and delivered himself, without resistance, to his executioners. For eighteen hundred years that he has reigned at the right hand of the Father, he never has ceased to give to men the example of the most universal and humiliating obedience. Every day multitudes of priests, be they fervent, lukewarm, or vicious—it is the same—summon him where it pleases them, give him to whom they will, confine him under lock and key, and dispose of him at their will. There is no person, from the youth to the old man, who has not a right to ask that he may enter into his heart, and whether this heart be the habitation of angels, or a receptacle of the infernal legions of vices; *Christ must obey*. There, again, the Son of the Most High *becomes obedient to death*. What will is so im-

* I. Peter ii. 13.

† Melior est obedientia quam victimæ. (I. Kings xv. 22.)

‡ Luke ii. 51. § Matth. xx. 28. ¶ Philipp. ii. 8.

patient of restraint that it does not yield to the yoke of obedience at the spectacle of such self-abnegation!

God, who is called *charity*,* desires not a heart closed to the love of its neighbor, and he does not pardon him who refuses pardon to his brother. Now what can be more adapted to melt the ice of selfishness, and dispose the most wounded heart for the forgetfulness of wrongs and injuries, than the daily spectacle of a God, who, not content with dying for us *when we were his enemies*,† forgets our perpetual ingratitude to become our nourishment, and pours out for us, in love, that same blood that we have shed and trampled under foot by our crimes. How, then, can I wish, and do evil to this brother, who, by communion, has become a living member of Jesus Christ! Would not my hatred and my blows fall upon him whom I adore! The Catholic who would open his heart to the breath of hatred and vengeance must first renounce his faith.

What protection have we against the allurements of disgraceful pleasures, like that thought of the Apostle, *that our bodies are the members of Jesus Christ*, and that we cannot pollute them without dreadful sacrilege!‡ Could he degrade himself to the level of a brute, who, at the Eucharistic banquet, has felt the virginal blood of the Son of Mary flowing through his veins!

It is not surprising that, in a church where Christ in person gives every day such instructions, there are found men courting contempt, enemies of their own will, men who cheerfully sacrifice their lives in the service of their brethren, and who live in the body as if they had none.

To these happy effects, in the midst of us, of the real presence of the Divine Physician of souls, let us add another still

* I. John iv. 16.

† Rom. v. 10.

‡ *Nonne quoniam corpus vestra membra sunt Christi? Tollens ergo membra Christi, &c. (I. Cor. vii. 15.)*

more so; it is the determination to take the bitter remedy of *Penance*. I would here express my own thought, in the words of a celebrated Protestant thinker: "Without the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, and the obligation to receive him in it by communion; the sacrament of penance, as it is practised in the Catholic Church, would never be accepted; and, to take from Catholicism the sacrament of penance, is to close up the source of the virtues which it offers to our admiration."* We will begin by giving an idea of penance.

CHAPTER XLIII.

PRINCIPLES OF LUTHER CONCERNING PENANCE.—PRINCIPLES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.—CONTRITION.

Nothing sounds so ill in the ear of the world as the word *Penance*. Why has not an attempt been made to efface from the Gospel this unfortunate expression? But certainly this is not an easy thing to do. What do we find in Scripture, if not the obligation to resist the impure tendencies of the heart, and to crucify it with its immoderate desires! Of the seven thousand six hundred verses of the New Testament, there are three thousand, at least, which make penance and mortification the indispensable condition of salvation for the sinner.

If the law of toilsome expiation were not so frequently and clearly laid down in Scripture, would not the life of Jesus itself, which was only a protracted martyrdom,† impose on the christian the obligation to chastise himself, and follow the

* Lord Fitz-William, *Letters of Atticus*, 5th.

† Tota vita Christi crux fuit et martyrium. (De Imitatione Christi, ii. xii. 7.

footsteps of the *Man of Sorrows*! How could he hope to share the glory of his chief, if he remained a stranger to his sufferings.*

Yet it is upon the sufferings of the Mediator that the authors of the Reformation rely, to free sinners from the obligation of suffering. Christ, according to them, has given satisfaction for our iniquities, why should we afflict our minds and hearts by penances which would add nothing to the merits of the Redeemer, and would even be injurious to them?

If it was objected, on the other hand, that the object of christian penance was not alone to expiate sin committed, but to prevent the recurrence of it, and that there is a certain demon, according to the words of Jesus Christ, which can be conquered only by *fasting* and *prayer*.† “Leave these fine recipes,” answered Luther, to the stupid Papists; “and if you wish to put the devil to flight, always do more than he suggests to you.” Let us listen to the Apostle of Wittemberg instructing his followers in his admirable asceticism.

“Poor Jerome Weller,” he writes to a friend who asked him for arms against the devil, “thou hast temptations; they must be overcome. When the devil comes to tempt thee, drink, my friend, drink freely, make merry, sport and sin, in hatred of the evil spirit, and to torment him. If he says to thee: Will you not stop drinking, answer him: I will drink glasses full, because you forbid it; I will drink great draughts in honor of Jesus Christ. Imitate me, I never drink so well, I never eat so much, I never enjoy myself so much at table, as when I am vexing Satan. I should really like to find some good new sin, that he might learn to his cost, that I ridicule everything that is sin, and that my conscience is never oppressed by it. Away with the Decalogue, when the devil

* Si tamen compatimur, ut et conglorificemur. (Rom. viii. 17.)

† Matth. xvii. 20.

comes to torment us! When he breathes into our ear: 'Thou sinnest; thou art worthy of death and hell.' Ah, my God! yes, I know it only too well; what would you tell me? But you will be condemned in the other life. It is not true; I know some one who has suffered and given satisfaction for me: he is called Jesus Christ, Son of God; where he is, there I shall be." *

Let us compare, with the vile prescriptions of the apostle of taverns, the salutary remedy which the Catholic Church offers to the Christian who has had the misfortune to violate seriously the engagements contracted in baptism. To free him from the chains of sin, she prescribes for him three things, *contrition, confession, satisfaction*.

"Contrition," says the Council of Trent, "which holds the first place among the acts of penance, is sorrow of soul and a sincere detestation of the sin committed, with a firm determination never more to commit it." †

Contrition is the penance of the heart; the first that God requires, and without which fasting and maceration of the body would be only hypocrisy in his eyes.‡ *From the heart*, said Jesus Christ, *come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, &c.*§ On the heart, then, punishment must first be inflicted. It is that which by sin has withdrawn itself from the divine control to place itself under the debasing yoke of the

* The remaining words refuse themselves to any translation: (See Audin, *Histoire de Calvin*, ch. xxv. tom. i. p. 453.) Other recipes against the suggestions of the devil may be found in the *Memoires de Luther, écrits par lui-meme*, by M. Michelet, liv. v. ch. 6. Add to that the *Sermon on Marriage*, then ask what is to be thought of the nations who hailed by the name of Apostle and Evangelist the impudent and sacrilegious libertine, whom Pagan Rome would have condemned to death by the rod of the lictor.

† Sess. xiv. *De Pœnit*, cap. iv.

‡ Scindite corda vestra et non vestimenta vestra. (Joel ii. 13.)

§ Matth. xv. 19.

passions; it must, then, be brought back, crushed with sorrow and covered with shame* to the feet of the master whom it has meanly abandoned.

Let us follow the series of virtuous acts by which the repentant sinner prepares himself freely under the Divine influence of grace for the blessing of justification according to the council quoted above.† Nothing can be more logical, more natural, or more moral than the path it marks out for this prodigal son, by which he can be delivered from the abyss of misery into which crime has led him and conducted back to his home where the embraces of the kindest of fathers await him, and the joys which his return will occasion.

While Protestant justification requires but two unimportant acts for a true moral renovation, in which the soul receives the Divine influence much more than it co-operates with it,‡

* Cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicias. (Ps. i. 19.)

† Concil. Trent. Sess. vi. *De Justific.* cap. vi.

‡ These two acts are at first the fear, the terrors, which the criminal experiences in view of his sins and the punishment preparing for him by the divine justice; a sentiment adapted it is true, to disturb the factitious pleasure which the sinner finds in crime, but incapable of breaking the ties which bind him to it. The fear of hell can delay the steps of the sinner in the road which leads to it; but of itself it will not lead to God by the way of justice.

Afterwards comes the act of *justifying faith*, by which the sinner seizes the robe of Christ's righteousness, covers himself with it as with a garment, impenetrable to the assaults of divine vengeance, and acquires the certainty that, however polluted he may be in himself, he is holy, pure and perfect before God. Shame, decency, it is true, obliged the leaders of the Reformation to demand of the justified sinner a new life, and the practice of virtue; but, as we have already observed, the corrective disappears before the Calvinistic dogma of Perseverance, and before the principle a hundred times repeated by Luther, that *there is only one sin worthy of damnation*, that is unbelief, and that the most enormous crimes *repeated a hundred times a day*, never corrupt in any way him who perseveres in thinking he is holy. (See as above, ch. 37.)

The Catholic penitential system embraces the whole interior man, and imposes on every faculty some restoring effort adapted to expel the diseased principle and reinstate the soul in its normal condition.

Is the mind of the sinner touched with a ray of divine light, or awakened by a movement of the heart, given from above, does he determine to throw off the lethargy into which the intoxication of the passions has plunged him, and place himself, by meditation, on the great principles of faith, at the only true point of view where man can know himself? He cannot but be greatly alarmed at the account he must every moment give at the tribunal of a God so just in the duties he imposes on man, so munificent in the rewards he promises, so terrible in the punishments he inflicts, so lavish in the means he furnishes to merit the one, and avoid the other.

This terror penetrates even into *the marrow of the bones*,* when reflecting on the past; the sinner discovers in it so much hostility to God and such defiance of his justice.

But God, whose avenging arm will eternally smite the hosts of angels guilty of one rebellion only, is also the God of charity who has delivered up his own Son for the salvation of the world. At the thought of the all-powerful *Advocate* who solicits and always obtains pardon for him who confidently has recourse to him,† hope revives in the criminal. His heart before contracted by fear, expands and gradually turns lovingly towards the compassionate source of all justice. The sin, which he at first detested as bringing down

What then is justification according to the principles of Calvin and Luther? It is a divine permission to sin, which takes from crime its last restraint, fear and remorse.

* Non est pax ossibus meis à facie peccatorum meorum. (Ps. xxxvii. 4.)

† Si quis peccaverit, advocatum habemus apud Patrem, Jesum Christum. (John ii. 1.)

upon him the weight of celestial vengeance, appears to him much more odious when love teaches him to look upon it as an offence against a supremely good and infinitely kind Father.

Such are the holy stations through which the Catholic Church intends the sinner should pass before receiving the sentence of absolution, whenever divine love does not diminish the length of the way by consuming in its burning flames the pollutions and the bonds of sin. In fact, the Church, which judges contrition so indispensable to the validity of the Sacrament of Penance, that no absolution on the part of the priest, no act of repentance on the part of the sinner could ever be a substitute for it, attributes to it, at the same time, so much power, when it is inspired by divine love, that it can reconcile the sinner with God before the sacramental act.*

It is easy to see the effectual securities which these preliminary acts of reconciliation furnish to the sinner against a relapse into vice. It is easy, too, for each one to estimate the justice of the reproach that Protestants bring against us, of favoring crime by making confession a magic bath, where the blackest criminals may plunge but for an instant and come forth white as snow.

CHAPTER XLIV.

CONFESSION.—IT IS NATURAL.—DIFFERENT KINDS OF ABSOLUTION.—NECESSITY AND UNIVERSALITY OF CONFESSION.

To the truly humble and contrite sinner confession appears, not as a punishment inflicted upon sin, but as a natural and necessary, and a divinely soothing remedy for a tortured conscience.

* Concil. Trent., Sess. xiv. *De Pœnit.* cap. iv. *De Contrit.*

The most painful and the most burdensome secret to be kept by a heart not yet polluted by disease, is that of crime. The soul which is animated by a real hatred of sin, naturally tends to separate herself from it, to force it out, as it were.

"The stomach which contains poison and which throws itself into a convulsion in order to reject it, is the natural image of a heart into which crime has poured its venom. It suffers, it labors, it contracts itself until it reaches the ear of friendship, or at least that of benevolence."*

To the desire of consoling itself by banishing the evil is united, in the penitent soul the need of expiating it. Now, "the universal conscience recognises in spontaneous confession an expiatory power and a merit of grace: there is but one sentiment on this point from the mother who questions her child concerning the breaking of a piece of porcelain, or a sweetmeat eaten contrary to orders, to the judge who from his high tribunal interrogates the robber and the assassin.†

The shame inseparable from confession, already so much diminished by the eternal silence divinely imposed on the only confidant who receives it, will never check the true penitent in whom the fear and love of God have prevailed over the fear of man and the desire for an undeserved reputation. The most insupportable confusion for him is that which he endures in the secrecy of his own conscience, before the presence of a God, who is the unavoidable witness of so many sins. What does it import to him that a feeble being and sinner like himself should know what he cannot conceal from the eye of Infinite Holiness!

Even for the man whom a sincere conversion has re-established in the truth, there is need of showing himself as he is, of accepting the contempt which he merits, of rejecting as undeserved the esteem which ignorance offers him. This

* De Maistre, *Du Pape*, liv. iii. ch. 3d. † Ibid.

thirst for truth and justice which leads a soul, deeply moved, to the public avowal of its errors, is not rare; and every experienced director knows that if there are cowardly penitents whose silence and timidity afflict the physician who has taken it upon himself to heal them, there are others whose indiscreet fervor must be restrained.

To these natural predispositions which singularly facilitate the approach to the confessional, may be added the pressing need that every soul agitated by remorse feels, of hearing the consoling words: *Go in peace, my brother, thy sins are forgiven thee.*

But, it will be objected, what mortal can ever have the right to hold this language to a fellow mortal? The question is not a new one;* but what means have those who judge the power of remitting sins to be incommunicable to mortals, of pacifying consciences convinced of their crimes and uncertain of pardon? For myself, I know but four kinds of absolution.

1st. The absolution which the Catholic priest gives to the penitent sinner in virtue of the power granted to the first priests: *Whatever thou shalt loose on earth, &c.—Receive of the Holy Ghost; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven them, &c.*†

2d. The absolution which the atheist gives himself in virtue of this principle: *There is no God, or it matters little to me if there be one.*

3d. The absolution which the multitude of unreflective minds administer to themselves in virtue of this extraordinary though tacit reasoning: *God is good; hence I may insult him without fear.*

4th. The absolution which the Lutheran gives himself, or rather the canonisation which he makes of himself, when he

* Quis potest demittere peccato nisi solus Deus. (Mark ii. 7.)

† Matth. xviii. 18; John xx. 23.

modestly says on the faith of Luther: *Sinner that I am, I have the certainty of being as holy in the eyes of God as the Apostles, Peter and Paul.*

Choose from among these different modes of absolution, the one which appears to you most moral, most soothing for the individual, most abounding in securities against everything which disturbs families and society.

So long as the soul inhabits a healthy body, and finds in pleasures and business food for its activity she may say in a kind of good faith, that in the conscience there is no room but for God; that the affairs of religion must be transacted between man and his Creator with closed doors; but this philosophic assurance becomes necessarily of diminished value as soon as age, infirmities and cruel deceptions oblige man to fall back upon himself, as soon as he feels the close of the drama of life approaching, and asks himself if the part he has played will obtain for him the praise or the blame of the Invisible Spectator.

Does he ask of God in prayer? His questions will remain unanswered. Those mortals are very rare with whom God deigns to converse.* He always makes use of an interpreter, and the word which he destines for Paul, he breathes into the ear of Ananias.†

Nothing is, then, more natural or more consoling than the intervention of a third person, who, after an exact examination of the conscience, says: "Have confidence, my brother; by the knowledge which I have of the divine goodness and the dispositions of your soul, and, above all, by the power which I have received from heaven, I am authorized to say to you that your sins are forgiven."

How many of our separated brethren—we have it from good authority—make the ministers of their worship sadly

* Ore enim ad es loquor ei, &c. (Numer. xii. 8.)

† Act. Apos. ix.

sensible of the melancholy inefficacy of the part they are playing, when, at the approach of death, they ask of them, with tears, some testimony of the divine forgiveness! Unfortunate tools of a fantastic priesthood, you recall to my memory the heart-rending history of a child, who, deprived by shipwreck of the breast which nourished him, cast himself in agony upon a bust of his mother, and expired, clinging to its bosom!

I have thus, I think, brought to light the germ of confession deposited by the Creator in the depths of the human heart, until the Redeemer unfolded it into a great tree, which would lend to repentant crime a salutary shelter from the strokes of divine justice and the devouring fires of despair.

I have, at the same time, explained the very singular and yet incontestable fact of the practice of confession among all the people of Pagan antiquity, and most of the modern idolatrous nations.

You who give credit for the invention of this painful practice to those whom it oppresses the most, the Catholic priests, if you were a little less ignorant, you would know that always and everywhere there has been confession.

Confession was made to the priests among most of the nations of Greece and Asia. The Emperor, Marcus Aurelius himself, having been initiated into the mysteries of Eleusis, was obliged to speak, for a long time, into the ear of the hierophant. Among the ancient Mexicans and Peruvians there was confession.* The people of Persia, China, Thibet, the kingdom of Siam, Ceylon, and Hindostan, &c., still confess.†

“On this point, as on all others, what has Christianity done? She has revealed man to man; she has taken possession of his inclinations, of his eternal and universal beliefs,

* See *Annales de Philosophie Chretienne*, tom. xxii. p. 145.

† See De Maistre, as above cited. *Recherches sur la Confession auriculaire*, by M. l'Abbé Guillois.

and placed under protection their ancient foundations; she has cleansed them from every stain, from every foreign admixture; she has honored them with the divine impress: and, upon these natural bases, she has established her supernatural theory of penance and sacramental confession.*

However pride may rebel against this salutary institution, it will only bring into stronger light this truth: Confession, by the humiliation which accompanies it, is the best specific against the first cause of our errors,† as it is, by the profound peace that follows it, the most unequivocal proof of our reconciliation with the supreme justice, *Peace being the work of justice.*‡

CHAPTER XLV.

MORAL AND SOCIAL INFLUENCE OF CONFESSION.—ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF UNBELIEVERS.—OMNIPOTENCE OF THIS PRACTICE IN THE MORAL EDUCATION OF MAN.—
CONNECTION BETWEEN CONFESSION AND COMMUNION.

CONFESSION, had it only the power to soothe and pacify the conscience, by freeing it from the poison of crime, would still be dear to virtuous souls, and would only offend hearts so hardened in sin as to blunt the sting of remorse. But this is only one of the many benefits we owe to it.

Its remarkable moral power has imposed silence on the most violent anti-Catholic prejudices, and there is but one voice, even among writers of the most opposite opinion, celebrating the salutary influence of this practice.

* Ibid, *Du Pape.*

† *Initium omnis peccati est superbia.* (Eccle. x. 15.)

‡ *Et erit opus justitiæ, pax.* (Isa. xxxii. 17.)

The Pagan, Seneca, has spoken of the reforming and guiding power of confession, after the manner of the masters of the spiritual life; and one cannot read his Epistles without inclining more and more to the belief that the preceptor of Nero had lent an ear to St. Paul, and received a summons to lay down the pride of philosophy at the feet of the minister of Jesus Christ.*

From the heathen philosophers of the first century, we pass to the anti-christian sophists of the eighteenth. Voltaire, their chief, tells us, in various parts of his works, that "*there is, perhaps, no wiser institution,*" . . . that "confession is an excellent thing, a restraint upon inveterate crime, a very good practice to prevent the guilty from abandoning themselves to despair, and relapsing into sin; to influence hearts ulcerated by hatred, to forgive, robbers to make restitution," . . . that "the enemies of the Romish Church, who have opposed so beneficial an institution, have taken from man the greatest restraint that can be put upon crime," &c.†

Rousseau exclaims: How many restitutions and reparations does confession procure among Catholics!‡ The madman Raynal attributes *to this very useful practice, which takes the place of penal laws, and watches over purity of manners*, the prodigies of the Jesuits at Paraguay, and he adds: "The best of all governments would be a theocracy, in which the tribunal of penance should be established." §

* See Epistles 52, 53. Concerning the more than probable relations of Seneca with St. Paul, who had formed a small community of Saints even in the Court of Nero. (Ep. to Philipp. vi. 22.) See De Maistre, *Soirées de St. Petersburg*, Entret. vii

† *Dict. Philosoph.*, art. *Catéch. du Curé*. *Annales de l'Empire*, tom. i. p. 41, &c. &c.

‡ *Emile*, tom. iii. p. 201.

§ *Histoire Philosoph. et polit. du commerce des Indes*, tom. iii. p. 258. It is true that he adds: *If it were always directed by virtuous men*. This is the microscopic spirit of the philosophers of the last

But no writer has more clearly shown the social utility of this practice than the Protestant author of the *Letters of Atticus*. Every judicious mind which examines it as closely as he, will agree with the celebrated nobleman, that auricular confession is the only truly efficacious remedy against the moral evils which torment the individual and society; that it is the exclusive source of all the virtues which constitute the happiness and security of the family and the State; and that, by the moral power which it exercises over the mind and will, it can take the place of all the laws, if the practice of it becomes general; whilst every system of government which is not based on it, is condemned to become only an illusion.*

What is, in fact, confession, seen from the most elevated point of view? It is christianity employing its whole moral power for the correction and perfecting of the individual.

Those who know what was the condition of the world at the moment when Christianity commenced, and who have followed its giant steps, from its beginning in the upper chamber, to our own time, will know its wonderful achievements. How many intellectual aberrations has it dispelled, from the shocking absurdities of idolatry to the seducing speculations of heresy and false science, by opposing to them the luminous simplicity of its doctrine! How many abominable practices has it abolished in the family, in the temples, and in the theatres! How much violence and social injustice has been repaired by the sanctity and sweetness of its morality! How many virtues, how much devotion, how many touching and heroic institutions its divine philanthropy has

century! They saw no remedy for abuses but in the destruction of institutions which elsewhere they recognised as vastly *wise and useful*. Poor maniacs who deliberately set fire to their houses to free themselves from cobwebs, and who did not comprehend that the most disastrous of abuses is not to endure them!

* *Letter 5th.*

substituted for the fierce calculations and barbarous inventions of Pagan selfishness!

And these wonderful transformations effected in the masses, Christianity daily reproduces in the individual at the confessional.

Here, again, the ambassador of Christ meets hearts in which reigns an idol, not of wood or metal, but animated, living, commanding. If this false God is not overthrown, after having received the incense of guilty thoughts, he will demand victims and blood; and the most abominable sacrifices of antiquity, human sacrifices, will revive.

Let us suppose that Robespierre, Marat, and their associates, instead of blindly following the inspirations of their pride, had consulted a confessor on the first approach of this familiar demon, is it not certain that two or three words whispered in the ear would have spared France many frightful hecatombs!

If we descend from historical criminals to those of lower conditions, what are they all? Infidels, whom the idol of gold, pleasure, or revenge, has rendered sanguinary. If docile to the voice of the Church, they had opened their heart to the eye of religion, *at least once a year*, justice would not be obliged to expiate in their blood the blood of their victims.

Generalize confession, and criminal tribunals would be superfluous. How many despisers of this practice owe to it the preservation of their fortune and their lives!

Here, again, the minister of Jesus Christ, approaching every mind with the torch of truth, prevents and stifles in the bud innumerable great and small heresies, dissipates many illusions of the mind and heart, which, brought into being by half knowledge and pride, would end by turning many brains.

There is a great difference between the word at a distance and the word in the ear; between the public word diffusing

itself very unequally among two or three thousand auditors, and the special word reaching the individual in all its fulness. Confession is the religious light proceeding from its source and individualizing itself in every heart. Take away confession, religious instruction loses its efficacy, and, ceasing to be the director of individual opinion, becomes its sport.

Here, again, the minister of Jesus Christ meets cruel parents, who, if they no longer destroy their new-born offspring as formerly, prevent their birth, or, at least, by their misconduct and neglect, prepare for them a future of misery and shame. How many children are indebted to confession for their existence, their morality, and the ease which they enjoy!

Here, again, the minister of Jesus Christ finds himself in the presence of masters, stern lords, who, if left to their natural inclinations, would, in fact, soon re-establish slavery, though abolished by our laws and customs. Their heart must be softened by the breath of charity, if they would not be excluded from the public banquet, where religion consoles and regales their victims.

It is at the confessional that the laws of justice and charity receive that rigorous application which the individual is incapable of making, blinded as he is by avarice and pride. The wrongs which confession prevents, checks, and repairs, are innumerable; the number of thefts, where it returns to the master what belongs to him, and preserves to the guilty the restraint of public esteem; the number of law-suits which it prevents or terminates quietly, and without expense; the animosities it quells, the reconciliations it effects, and the revenge that it changes to kindness, escape all calculation.

It is at the confessional that religion teaches Statesmen that to govern a nation is not to *devour* it.* Whatever may

* Among most Asiatic nations, the language, the faithful expression of the habits, has made *devour* synonymous with *reign*; "To reign,

be said to the contrary, happy are the people whose governors confess! * They will be governed by their confessor, it may be said. Even if it were so, is not the influence of a man who is under a religious obligation to speak to princes and ministers the language of the Gospel, far better than to be at the mercy of mistresses and courtiers exclusively occupied, as they are, with moulding and turning to their own advantage the passions of their master? But this is not all; every prince who does not make a sport of confession, must reflect seriously on his duties before presenting himself there, and he cannot long be ignorant that his first obligation is to be and to remain what God has made him, a king. If Henry VIII. had continued to confess, and had bequeathed this practice to his successors, would the English have been sufferers on that account! If Napoleon, instead of awaiting the forced tranquillity of exile to set his conscience in order, had employed some hours every year, at Easter, in making an exact review of his conduct, and consulting the law of God on its moral and even political bearing, he, undoubtedly, would have died

in Siamese, says a learned missionary, is translated by *Savenirat*, which signifies *to eat the people*. It is not said of such a mandarin that he is governor of a certain city, but it is said; *he eats* such a city; and often with more truth than would be believed." (*Letter of Mgr. Bruguière, Bishop of Capse, Annales de la Propag.* tom. v. p. 172.) The revolution of '93, which led immediately to barbarism, also introduced many synonyms of this kind.

† M. Dupin said not long since to the Chamber, (March 19, 1844,) "Let us remind the clergy that we are all under a government where there is no confession!" Alas! M. Dupin, is not the fact evident from the constant increase of our expenditures, and the constantly descending progress of our affairs! To remind our clergy of the neglect of religion by our governors does no great harm; but to proclaim it aloud in the ear of the people, is imprudence. A master, however undevout he may be, likes to see those in his employ going from time to time to confession. If he finds they neglect it, he distrusts them, and begins to think of their removal.

on the throne, and his glory, still greater than it now is, and above all power, would have eclipsed all other glory.

It is, moreover, at the confessional that the eye and the hand of religion, penetrating into the deepest recesses of the heart, roots out its vices and its faults, plants and develops in it the virtues, and raises them, by wise and assiduous culture, even to heroism.

Ask the angels in human form, who devote themselves, in our hospitals, to the service of the unfortunate, what attaches them to offices so revolting to our nature; they will tell you it is confession and frequent communion. The one offers celestial light to the mind, long subjected to the dazzling sophisms of selfishness; the other nourishes the heart with the bread of angels, which, without it, would become lifeless, and return to the leeks of Egypt.

Confession and Communion are the two royal gates by which christianity penetrates into the internal man, wipes away its numerous stains, heals all its diseases, changes it to a delicious garden, where Christ refreshes himself, and from which virtue breathes forth its fragrance far and wide.

Close one of these doors, and the other will close too. Confession is exact, sincere, and will produce the fruits of justice, only in proportion as it is the effect of faith in the real reception of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. The communion, without the preliminary of confession, would be abandoned by timid virtue, or would be unworthily frequented by presumptuous pride.

This double gate once walled up, however inventive Christianity may become externally, in multiplying festivals, displaying the eloquence of its Chrysostoms, thundering forth the shouts of its Pergoleses and its Palestrinas; man, from the high ramparts of his pride, will sometimes deign to take part in the sport of the player, will bestow upon him some praises, and perhaps a few pieces of gold; but he will remain himself.

Such is the melancholy position of religion where there is no confession. She is hardly tolerated in the temples; and Paganism, refined by christian civilization, rules all hearts.

CHAPTER XLVI.

DIVINITY OF CONFESSION.—ABSURDITY OF THE CONTRARY
OPINION.—OBJECTION THAT IT DEGRADES MAN.—
RESULTS OF ITS ABOLITION.

LET me now be permitted to address the following question to those who have examined the preceding considerations. Do you really believe than an institution so exclusively efficacious as confession, and which can never be replaced by any other, could have escaped the divine eye of the Author of Christianity, and have been neglected by his will, so powerful to liberate man from himself, in order to lead him to aspire to the possession of God, and confer happiness on his fellow-beings?

If the precept of confession had not so evidently originated from the power given by Jesus Christ to his ministers to *loose* and to *bind*, to grant and withhold the remission of sins, according to the exigencies of the case,* if the practice of confession had not been established, even in the infancy of Christianity,† if all christian antiquity did not present so compact a body of testimony in favor of the perpetuity and universality of this practice, everything would lead us to believe it to be a divine institution.

The fact, alone, of its immemorial usage in the Catholic Church and in the schismatic churches of the East, does not

* Matth. xviii. 18. John xx. 23.

† Matth. iii. 6. Act. Ap. xix. 18. James v. 16. I. John i. 9.

permit the least doubt on this subject. Who but the God-Man could have induced human pride to accept a remedy so repugnant to it!

I shall immediately be answered: 'The priests have invented confession! The difficulty is not at all in the invention, but in the adoption by the christian world of a practice so humiliating.

Let us exaggerate, as much as we will, the ignorance and barbarism of the middle ages. The men of that period were generally less learned than we; but, as to points of christian doctrine, they knew as much of them, and incontrovertibly adhered to them more tenaciously. If, at an epoch when even the words confession and confessional were unknown, a foolish fellow should have taken it into his head to ascend the pulpit and say: *By order of Jesus Christ and his church, confess to the priests all your sins, even the most secret, if you wish to obtain pardon*, he would have been received with shouts of laughter, and, in case of resistance, would have been led to the stake, the method established at that time for refuting obstinate innovators.

It is, certainly, an amusing absurdity, that three hundred thousand bishops, priests, abbés, and monks, should conspire, and, some fine day, intimating to the world the obligation hitherto unheard of to confess, should establish confessionals everywhere, and confine themselves to them for half their life, with no other personal advantage than the hatred which accrues to them from so painful and repulsive an office.* But to imagine that two hundred millions, at least, of Christians had graciously yielded to such an imposition, and that no one

* Every one can see, and the priests above all, must know, that it is neither by their homilies in the pulpit, nor by their chants before the altar, nor by their charitable care of the sick and the unfortunate, that the ministers of Jesus Christ accomplish daily these prophetic words: *Eritis odio omnibus propter nomen meum.* (Matth. x. 22.)

appealed, in aid of his deeply wounded pride, to the very legitimate zeal for the ancient religion of his fathers, is an extravagance which surpasses all bounds, and will only excite the pity of any one who *has not received his soul in vain*.

The enemies of confession should remember that there have been before them men, also endowed with common sense, and whose passions were no less rebellious than ours. The repugnance which this practice meets with in men of the nineteenth century it encountered from the men of the middle age, and probably still stronger. Certainly, those fierce children of the North who had triumphed over the legions of Rome, and seen at their feet the masters of the world, had not such pliant joints! But miscreant pride still repeats: I clearly see, myself; what have I to do with the convictions of the old world, an abject troop of feeble persons, led at will by the priests!

As to the objection made to confession, that it degrades man too much by dragging him to the feet of his fellow-man,* in addition to the derision passed on it by the fact of a divine institution, every man of sense will consider it unfounded; he will find in the dealings of God towards the miserable transgressors of his laws a delicacy, a *reverence* for their reputation,† which the most merciful sovereign never manifested towards the infringers of human law.

* “Catholicity forces men into a very puerile practice, and does not sufficiently respect human dignity, when it leads man to the feet of man, to that tribunal which it names *its tribunal of penance*.” (*Des Beaux—Arts et de la langue des signes dans les églises chrétiennes réformées*, by M. C. A. Muller, Paris, 1841.) It is unpleasant to meet such words in a work full of excellent things, and written with a fairness and impartiality unfortunately very rare among Protestant ministers, when treating of the subject of Catholic worship. The estimable author should know that the Catholic Church invites to confession, but never forces any one. As to the *puerility* of this practice, I would refer my readers to the two preceding chapters.

† Cum magna reverentia disponis nos. (Sap. xii. 18.)

What legislature has ever said to criminals: Choose from among my ministers him who inspires you with the most confidence; confess to him all your crimes; you will preserve your honor, your property, your liberty, your life, and death awaits your confidant alone, if he betrays your secret! God has done this; and yet man complains! Pascal saw in these absurd objections a strong proof of our *original perversity*.*

Man is degraded when he destroys his reason by the violation of the moral law. He elevates himself, on the contrary, when he voluntarily acknowledges his errors to his chosen confidant and applies to him for the means of living as man should live.

What, then, can be more ridiculous than this reproach of the forgetfulness of human dignity, brought by a handful of men against the whole Catholic world! Subtract from the catalogue of human examples all those who have *violated honor* by confessing at least on their death-bed, what will remain but *the kingdoms of empty space*!

From a multitude of names which form the most brilliant constellations of history, I shall quote only three, that were so brilliant as to eclipse their age, Charlemagne, Louis XIV., Napoleon. All three had to a high degree, the consciousness of their personal dignity; yet, all three confessed; and it is well known that, with the last, this act of religious submission was neither the influence of habit, nor caused by the solicitation of those around him, but from a deep conviction.† Irreligion, it is true, terms it the *last abdication* of the great man;‡ but it is just to observe that it was more voluntary

* *Pensées*, Art. v. § 8.

† In the *Vie de Napoleon*, by M. Michaud, may be seen, (*Biograph. Univ.* tom. lxxv,) the obstacles and the ridicule which the illustrious captive had to overrule from his mean jailors and even from one of his companions in exile, in order to fulfil his religious duties.

‡ This striking absurdity belongs, if my memory does not deceive me, to the soporific *Histoire de Napoleon*, by M. Navins.

than that of Fontainebleau and that it caused him less regret; for the following words were uttered by the great *abdicator* himself to the noble attendant on his misfortunes:

“General, I am happy, I have fulfilled all my duties; I wish you, at your death, the same happiness. I felt the need of it, you perceive: I am an Italian, a Corsican schoolboy. The sound of the bells moves me; the sight of a priest gives me pleasure. I intended to keep all this a secret; but it must not be; I ought, and I wish to give glory to God.”*

Among his brave soldiers without fear and without reproach, who, like him, had escaped the fire of the battlefield, how many have wished thus *to give glory to God!*

To fear God and ridicule those who despise him is courage and wisdom. To brave God and our conscience for fear of displeasing some bipeds who do not see the one, and do not feel the other, is the lowest degree of cowardice and folly.

Let us observe, finally, that if Reformers have cast a blight upon religion, by depriving it, with confession, of the regulator of the mind and heart, they at least have had the frankness to deplore this fault and to seek to repair it.

It is well known that the first Reformers made various efforts to save this precious institution from the general shipwreck.

Luther, in a singular manner, adhered to what he called *the only remedy for afflicted souls*;† and Melancthon, in preparing the Augsburg Confession places auricular confession among the sacraments adopted by the new Church. Calvin recognised its utility, and there was a time when his disciples in France taught its necessity.‡ The Anglican Liturgy preserved it *for the consolation of the sick*.

But the Divine seal once effaced, there was little gained by

* Words of Napoleon to M. Montholon, in the Biography quoted above.

† *Little Catechism.—Concerning Babyl. Captiv.* x.

‡ *Nouveauté du Papisme*, by the minister Dumonlin, liv. vii. ch. 1.

boasting to the people of the excellence of this restraint to aid them in controlling their passions, they threw it far from them, and celebrated their deliverance by such a horrible relaxation of habits, that the end of the world seemed at hand.*

The inhabitants of Nuremburg in alarm sent an embassy to Charles V. to obtain from him an edict re-establishing confession. The Swedish Church solicited that measures should be taken against the libertinism which was let loose by the absence of confession, *libertinism so frightful*, they exclaimed, *that there is no one who does not believe himself at liberty to satisfy his passions. The horses are running away with the coachman, according to the proverb, and the reins no longer guide the chariot.*† The ministers of Strasburg in 1670, also vainly implored the magistrates of the city to declare confession obligatory.‡

Last of all, the same demand was addressed to Frederic William III. by one of his counsellors. I can recommend nothing more important to your Majesty than confession. The Church possesses no more effectual instrument to preserve Christians in the fear of God.§

What does all this prove? That men might have spoken and written for twenty centuries the finest sentiments concerning the necessity of confession, and not have been able to induce even one individual to go any farther, if a divine voice had not said: Confess!

* *Mémoires of Luther*, book v. ch. vii.

† See *Guide du Catéch. Vaudois*, tom. iii. p. 435.

‡ Ibid.—Scheffmacher, *Letter v.*

§ *Gazette évangélique de Berlin*, 1829. n. 81.

CHAPTER XLVII.

SACRAMENT OF ORDINATION.—CELIBACY.—ITS INTIMATE CONNECTION WITH THE PRIESTHOOD.

EVERYTHING is connected in the Catholic system. If the Eucharist requires penance, both demand the Sacrament of Ordination.

Is it not evident that the unction of divine grace must flow in large waves over the feeble mortal who has the awful power of bringing down upon the altar the Holy One, offering him as the victim of propitiation in the name of the human race, receiving him into his heart, and distributing him to those present! Must not that man be impressed with the divine seal, who has the right to penetrate into the conscience, and the power to transform this polluted den of all the vices into a sanctuary worthy of the Divinity!

In religious societies of human formation, men assemble and say to one of their number: "Be the minister of our worship;" and that is ordination. The same act which qualifies the person elected to receive the emolument of minister, confers upon him the right to exercise his functions. What more is necessary to a man than a human choice in order to govern a human institution?

In a divine religion, human election is not sufficient. How could men confer on a man the right to conduct the affairs of God, and dispense his gifts! Can the master of heaven and earth be proscribed or held in tutelage!

It is evident that *no man can take the honor to himself, but he that is called by God as Aaron was; so also Christ did not glorify himself to be made a High Priest, but he himself*

*that said to him : Thou art my Son, and in creating thee from my own substance, I have made thee my equal in power.**

That the Pontiff of the Church, before communicating to the candidates of the sanctuary a power formidable to the angels, turns towards the religious assembly, and asks of it if it judges them worthy of such a charge, and if it has no objection to offer against them; that the people and their magistrates united to the clergy have preserved the custom of electing and presenting these subjects, is a preliminary, but does not constitute the priest. The elected of men cannot become the *Man of God*, except Christ says to him by the mouth of a successor of the Apostles: *I send you as my Father has sent me : Go, teach, baptize ! Do this in memory of me ; Forgive or retain sin, &c. ! †*

Take from the ministry of religion its divine investiture, and it is only a miserable deception; its functions are only a sacrilegious and absurd mockery. What would be thought of the individual who should announce himself as minister of state without the sanction of the sovereign? How would his acts be substantiated!

I will say nothing of the rite by which the Catholic Church consecrates her ministers. I pass on to the obligation she imposes on them to live in celibacy. Is this obligation in harmony with the duties of the priesthood? Is there nothing in it prejudicial to society?

The world has decided the first question in favor of the Catholic Church. Even when the priest ascended the altar only to offer upon it the smoke of incense and the flesh of bulls, the universal conscience imposed continence upon him.

* Nec quisquam sumit sibi honorem, sed qui vocatur à Deo tanquam Aaron. Sic et Christus non semetipsum clarificavit ut pontifex fieret; sed qui locutus est ad eum: Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te. (Hebr. v. 4. 5.)

† Tu autem, ô Homo Dei. (I. Tim. vi. 11.)

*The incompatibility of the priestly office with intercourse with women, even in the legitimate relation of marriage, is an opinion common to men of all times, of all places, and of all religions, as the distinguished author of the immortal book *Du Pape* has demonstrated, with rare erudition.**

How strange! that after christianity has elevated the priest to the incomprehensible dignity of the *coadjutor of God* in the redemption of the world,† that the question has been proposed, if it would not be suitable that he should take a wife!

If silence is imposed on the men whose incompetency is manifest, I mean on bad priests and the systematic enemies of every priesthood, it will be found that christian nations absolutely unite in opinion on this subject with the rest of the world. Protestantism itself, the born enemy of religious celibacy, in its quality of offspring of married monks and priests, has only confirmed the universal opinion by the profound contempt with which it overwhelms *reverend husbands*, and the insult it attaches to the epithet *son of a priest*!‡

I do not wish to repeat here what I have elsewhere said of the invincible repulsion which exists between the idea of the priest and the idea of the husband, between the duties of a father according to the spirit and a father according to the flesh. Let the conscientious man reflect and weigh the following questions.

Is it right that the mortal whom Jesus Christ has called to become *the light of the world, the salt of the earth*, and whom he has elevated above the angels, by associating him with the infinite grandeur of his priesthood, should be drawn into the routine of common life!

Could we see, without a shudder, the hand which received by holy unction the power to consecrate and dispense the

* *Du Pape*, liv. iii. ch. 3.

† *Dei enim adjutores sumus.* (I. Cor. iii. 9.)

‡ *Du Pape*, loc. cit.

body of the Son of the Virgin, clasping the hand of a woman before the altar?

Can he to whom the eternal priest has said: *Go, teach all nations under the sun*, bind himself to one spot by the various ties of family?

Is the spiritual head of four or five hundred families, who is obliged to share his bread with those who have none, to guide all ages, from the earliest infancy to extreme old age, in the arduous path of salvation, and to diffuse, among countless numbers of the spiritually diseased, the very delicate care that the divine art of healing souls demands—can he take upon himself the solitudes of married life?

*Finally, who would consent to make him the possessor of his secrets, who has made a wife the possessor of his own?**

Let us listen to the eloquent thinker above quoted. "That wonderful power which checked Theodosius at the gate of the temple, Attala before that of Rome, and Lewis XIV. before the altar; that still more wonderful power, which can soften, confound, and restore to life; which enters the palace to extort gold from the unfeeling or thoughtless man of wealth, in order to pour it into the lap of poverty; which confronts everything, and overrules everything, as soon as a soul is to be soothed, enlightened, or saved; which insinuates

* "In countries where the marriage of priests is customary, confession, the most beautiful of moral institutions, has, and must necessarily have ceased at once. It is natural that persons should not put him in possession of their secrets who has put a wife in possession of his own; there is a reasonable fear of trusting to a priest who has violated his contract of fidelity with God, and repudiated the Creator to wed the creature." (Chateaubriand, *Génie du Chrétien*, liv. i. ch. 8.) De Maistre, in the work above quoted, has completely answered those who would produce the example of the schismatic churches of Greece and Russia, where confession has survived celibacy. The able author of *l'Hermite en Russie*, has shown in his true or factitious history of Varinka, one of the many dangers that confession incurs in the priest who is *half a woman*, ch. 4S.

itself gently into the conscience, to obtain from it its dreadful secrets, and to root out vice; the indefatigable organ and guardian of sacred unions, the no less active enemy of all license; wild without weakness, terrible, yet loving; the invaluable support of reason, probity, honor, and all human strength, at the moment when they declare themselves powerless; a precious and inexhaustible source of reconciliations, reparations, restitutions, and effectual repentance, of all that God loves most next to innocence; standing by the cradle of man with a benediction, still standing by his death-bed, and saying to him, in the midst of the most pathetic exhortations and the tenderest adieus: *Depart*; this supernatural power is not found "in the country where the priest takes a wife." There the priesthood is powerless, and trembles before those whom it should cause to tremble. It dares not, it cannot say to him who acknowledges he has robbed: *Restore*. The vilest man is bound to him by no promise. The priest is employed like a machine. It might be said that his words are a kind of mechanical operation which effaces sin, as the soap effaces material stains."*

Let us consult history, and ask what would have become of Christianity in the hands of a clergy rendered stationary by matrimony. Neither the sword of the Cesars, nor the pen of a Celsus nor a Julian, would have been needed to stifle it in its cradle; the prisons of the Sanhedrim and the officers of the high-priest Caiphas would have sufficed. At the first tempest which arose against them, the ambassadors of Christ would have forgotten their mission to attend to their wives and children.

Protestant ministers are seen every day traversing the seas, accompanied by their wives and children, and going to establish themselves in the English possessions of India and Polynesia, with the certainty of finding there a lordly mansion,

* *Du Pape*, liv. iii. ch. 3. § ii.

and the means of making a sudden fortune; but we never see them, and we shall never see them, going to plant the cross or the Bible in China, Corea, or Japan, at the evident risk of soon expiring in frightful tortures.

A married clergy must necessarily be separated from the queen of virtues, and the mother of great self-devotion, charity, from profound study, and all that wins favor from God and man. It will neither aspire to the martyr's crown, nor the sceptre of science, nor the triumphs of benevolence over every variety of misery. Vainly should we demand from it an Ambrose, an Augustine, a Chrysostom, a Leo, a Gregory, a Bossuet, a Fenelon, a Bourdaloue, a Mabillon, a Francis Xavier, a Francis de Sales, a Vincent de Paul, a John-of-God, a John Baptiste de la Salle, &c.; it will supply only what is to be found everywhere—hirelings.

In presence of the admirable moral effects of religious celibacy, and the universal veneration which it inspires, of what importance is the favorite argument of the host of Epicureans of all ages, from Vigilantius to Luther, and from Luther to the libertines of our day, who repeat their disgraceful homilies upon the *necessity of obeying nature*, and the danger of doing violence to it? How shall we answer men who do not fear to charge, with a horrible hypocrisy, the innumerable imitators of the virginity of Christ, whom Christian history presents to our veneration, and who, while they refuse to believe in the possibility of virtue, prove that they have reached the lowest limits of brutality? We will answer them in words which they have doubtless read in one of their own books, which we hardly venture to name (*La nouvelle Heloise*), that *this necessity is imaginary, and only acknowledged by persons of bad life: that all these pretended wants have not their origin in nature, but in the voluntary degradation of the senses.*

Let us proceed to the political point of view.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

SOCIAL IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS CELIBACY.—POSITION OF THE PRIEST IN SOCIETY.—NULLITY AND INCONVENIENCE OF A MARRIED PRIESTHOOD.

WE are far removed from those times when the great politicians of the Encyclopedia feared the approaching end of the human race, if priests did not take wives, and nuns husbands. The nineteenth century is not sufficiently profound to imagine what tenor lies in that oracle of Rousseau: *Celibacy is so injurious to the human race, that it would perish if it were everywhere practised.**

The Catholic clergy cannot be reproached with discouraging marriage. They might rather be accused of increasing pauperism by their alleged blind encouragement of it. A writer filled with the narrow prejudices of the last century has recently done this.†

All modern political economists, with Malthus at their head, agree in declaring that society is threatened with terrible catastrophies, if that unknown force is not checked, which is constantly swelling population beyond the means of subsistence.

Some persons would counsel governments *to place a formal interdict on the marriage of the poor*;‡ others, which nearly amounts to the same thing, would not hesitate to forbid marriage to the laborer who did not hold ten acres of property, or rent twenty acres.§

* *Lettre à M. de Beaumont, Archevêque de Paris.*

† M. Sismonde de Sismondi, *Nouveaux principes d'économie politique*, quoted and refuted by M. the Viscount Alban de Villeneuve, *Economie politique chrétienne*, tom. i. p. 207.

‡ Among others, M. Stewart, in his work previously quoted, p. 198.

§ M. Sismondi, *ibid.*

It appears that this counsel has been followed in many Protestant States of Switzerland and Germany. The restrictions of all kinds that have been imposed upon the marriage of the poor, and of laborers who have only their industry for a support, prove that, with all our intelligence and civilization, we could give lessons in barbarism to the Caffres and Hottentots.*

To the honor of political economy it must be said, that most of the writers who discuss these vital questions, reject all means of constraint, which are contrary to humanity and good morals, and insist on the *moral restraint* so much recommended by Malthus. Thus, they would wish, that while enlightening the people with regard to their true interests, individuals of the working and poorer classes should be induced not to involve themselves in marriage without great prudence. But, as M. de Maistre observes, "this is the fable of the bell; the difficulty is to attach it to the bearer. Propose to the youth of ardent feelings to relinquish marriage, in order to maintain the equilibrium of society, how would you be received?" †

What no human power could do, the Church has done by the law of celibacy, "And with all the perfection which human affairs will allow; since *Catholic restraint* is not only *moral*, but divine, and the Church supports itself on motives so sublime, on means so efficacious, on menaces so terrible, that it is not in the power of the human mind to imagine anything equal or approaching to it." ‡

Besides the advantage of opposing a barrier to the excessive increase of population, ecclesiastical celibacy possesses another of still greater weight in the social scale; it is to

* On this subject may be recommended a work of great research, and full of interesting facts, by M. F. N. L. Naville, *De la charité légale*, Geneva, 1836, tom. i. part ii. sect. ii.

† *Du Pape*, tom. ii. p. 107.

‡ *Du Pape*, tom. i. p. 108.

prevent the priesthood from becoming, by its monopoly in a few families, the most expensive, as well as the most useless of sinecures.

Habit alone renders us insensible to the admirable social position of the Catholic priest. He is peculiarly the public man, the point of meeting of all classes.

So much the more powerful in this world, as his power is not of this world, he rules all conditions by the elevation of his character, and embraces them all in the circle of his charity. No greatness is so high, no misery so low, as to escape his influence.

In the morning he catechises the vagabonds of the streets, carries consolation and hope to the outcasts of society, and takes his place in the death-car between the criminal and his executioner; in the evening, under the surplice of a Bourdaloue, he makes the haughtiest monarchs and the most brilliant courts tremble.

Judging of men, not according to the distinctions by which they are classed in space and time, but according to their common origin and destiny, he reminds them all of the sentiments of fraternity which their equal dependance on their Father and Master in Heaven demands. He brings down continually to the level of death the swelling of pride, the grandeur of power and wealth; he elevates the morality of the humble and unfortunate by the right of the elder-born to the majesty of heaven, which a God who became poor, has secured to them. He obliges the great to regard the poor, not as the unfortunate who are to be consoled, but as friends and protectors, whose mediation with the King of kings must be purchased by alms,* as a skilful financier who has the secret of increasing a hundred-fold the gold confided to his care. He teaches the poor man to reverence and bless the

* *Facite vobis amicos . . . ut recipiant vos in æterna tabernacula.*—
(Luke xvi. 9.)

great as his benefactors, and the noble representatives of the divine bounty.

If, faithful to his mission, the priest forgets himself, content with modest garments and his daily bread, knowing no other kindred, no other family than that which religion gives him, he becomes all powerful. His respectful, but firm and intrepid voice, will make the cry of misery, the plaints and murmurs of the victims of injustice and oppression resound in the saloon of wealth, in the ear of the great, and in the council of kings; his hand will unlock the treasures of opulence and pour them into the abodes of misery.

He will not be satisfied with procuring bread for the hungry and forsaken invalid; he will solicit for him the honors due to the living representative of a poor and suffering God. The inhabitants of palaces will follow him to the hospitals, and the most forlorn dwellings; royal hands will smooth the pillow of the mendicant, prepare his garments, his linen, and his remedies.

Then is established that interchange of favors and benedictions, of love and gratitude which forms of all the members of society one family, of whom the rich and great are the elders. Then is realised the miracle of Christian society, sung by Isaiah:

“The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid; the calf and the lion, and the sheep shall abide together, and a little child shall lead them. The calf, and the bear shall feed: their young ones shall rest together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp: and the weaned child shall thrust his hand into the den of the basilisk.”

But from whence does the priest obtain this divine authority which he exercises for the advantage of all; of the humble whom he saves from oppression, and of the great whom he rescues from the abyss into which tyranny is rushing? From

whence does he derive that power of levelling and blending which he incessantly opposes to the selfish tendencies that would soon divide men into nobles surfeited with riches, and into voracious serfs, or rather pariahs? From the fact of his celibacy as much as from his title of minister of the Most High.

Let priests marry, what would be the consequence? What has happened in England and all Protestant countries which have preserved the sacerdotal hierarchy. The anti-social spirit of cast, against which Catholicity has not ceased to protest by recruiting its ministry from all ranks, and recognising no other claims to the highest functions but those of merit and virtue, the spirit of cast invades the priesthood. The highest dignities have become the exclusive apanage of the younger sons of the family. And these, to revenge themselves for the contempt with which inexorable public opinion pursues a false and useless priesthood, seek to surround themselves with the consideration which is attached to wealth.

Not satisfied with vast revenues, they do not disdain the smallest profits of the smallest traffic, and write boldly on the gate of the episcopal palace: *Here small beer is sold.** They bestow on their children, their sons-in-law, their relatives and friends the best benefices, and the richest curacies. They plunder so successfully that, in poor Ireland, twelve Bishops of *the Church established by law*, have left to their families the modest sum of sixty one millions and a half of francs! †

* Cobbett, *Letters on the Reformation*, &c., Letter 4th.

† An English work recently published under the title: *Ireland as a Kingdom and a Colony*, presents (239) estimates the total amount of property left by twelve of the last Anglican Bishops deceased in Ireland, at "61,500,000 francs." (See *l'Ami de Religion*, May 15th, 1844.) The same journal gave some time after, the amount of property left by Mgr. Troy, Catholic Archbishop, Primate of Ireland, recently deceased, leaving for his whole fortune 10 pence half-penny, (one franc, five cents.)

Subordinate to the higher clergy, are a throng of poor curates and vicars, "whose only function (except reading and some chants in the church on Sunday) is to rear large families: and these escape beggary only by means of two or three millions, which their cries wrest every year from the English parliament."*

The absolute nullity of such a priesthood leads selfishness to divide the human family into two classes; on one side power, riches, pleasure, science, consideration; on the other, indigence, opprobrium, ignorance, famine, and death—between them an abyss of hatred and antipathy.

CHAPTER XLIX.

BARRIER WHICH THE CATHOLIC PRIESTHOOD OPPOSES TO DESPOTISM.—WEAKNESS OF CONSTITUTIONAL GUARANTEES.—POLITICAL NECESSITY FOR THE DISTINCTION OF POWER INTO SPIRITUAL AND TEMPORAL.—IMMENSE SERVICES WHICH CATHOLICISM HAS RENDERED TO LIBERTY.

A PRIESTHOOD which derives its powers from God alone, and which, by celibacy, escapes the seductions of fortune, will, without doubt, displease certain statesmen, who, once placed at the helm of affairs, find the concentration of all powers in the same hands a very fine thing, and also the liberty thus given of saying to every public functionary who dares to open his mouth: Obey in silence, or retire!

What can be more inconvenient for the governing who are enemies of all restraint, than an eccentric inalienable administration, which will boldly say to them on many occasions: Gentlemen, you are leaving your own sphere and invading

* Cobbett, *Letters on the Reformation*, &c., Letter 4th.

ours! We cannot obey you without disobeying God, and betraying the spiritual interests of the people whom he has committed to us.

Nothing could be more mortifying for a man ambitious of power, than this distinction between spiritual and temporal authority, and the reservation that God has made to the first, of the glorious department of souls.

How much rivalry, how many conflicts would disappear, if the tiara of the Pontiff and the royal or imperial crown were placed upon the same head; the sword and the crosier, the sceptre and the censor, the baton of justice and the keys of heaven, in the same hand.

Alexander, at Tilsitt, boasted much to his friend of the Tuilleries of the homogeneousness of the Russian government and unqualified submission to the ukase of its Bishops, Abbots, and Priests. Perhaps the Emperor of the West, much disturbed then at finding a priest who dared to dispute with him *the empire of minds*,* envied the Czar his omnipotence.

However that may be, I doubt much if there are many men in Europe, who, to avoid the conflicts of jurisdiction, would be willing to transmute their sovereigns into autocrats. I doubt even if the most ambitious man would accept the Muscovite despotism with the qualification that accompanies it. It is well known that these Russians, who anticipate all the wishes of their master, like their Turkish neighbors; like them, too, have reserved to themselves the right to strangle.

Do all you please, and when we are weary we will murder you, is the threat which the subjects of a despot are always expected to inflict upon him.† And it should be so: it is a principle of eternal justice engraved on the hearts of men, and

* See the words of Napoleon to M. de Fontanes, as quoted, ch. xxxiv. note.

† *Du Pape*, liv. ii. ch. iv.

on the pages of history, that everything is permitted against a man to whom nothing is forbidden.

A wise and moderate principle of opposition may, indeed, annoy ambitious power, but it saves it, and preserves its real strength, by compelling it to be just. It is the ballast which, while moderating the progress of the ship, prevents it from an overturn. We always advance rapidly enough, when we travel in the right direction.

Much might be said in praise of that general law of the universe, which everywhere resists homogeneousness, divides forces, opposes them to each other, and produces, as the result, order, beauty, and life; not *unity*, but union.*

The last age and our own have seen no securities for liberty, except in the division and balance of the political powers. This is the great effort of human wisdom against despotism. It is, also, if we may be permitted to say it, a beautiful hint borrowed from the divine constitution of the Church, which possesses, in the episcopacy, a peerage and a representation serving as a balance and support to the Pontifical Supremacy.

But the balance of powers is only a mockery where religion does not check the passions, by protecting, with the seal of divine inviolability, the rights of all, and bending the will to the common yoke of duty! It is easy to balance material forces; but how can human wills of such unequal power be harmonized, except by submitting them to the rule marked out by an all-powerful will!

* What is called union in a political body is a very equivocal thing; the true union is one of harmony which unites all parties, however antagonistic they may appear, for the general welfare of society, as discords in music contribute to a complete harmony. There may be union in a state, where only disturbance is apparent; that is a harmony from which happiness results, which is the only true peace. As the various parts of the universe are eternally united by the action of some and the reaction of others. (*Montesquieu, Grand. et Décad. des Romains*, ch. ix.)

Among a people who have ceased to be truly Christian, by ceasing to be Catholic, what is a representative government? It is despotism passing from hand to hand, until it becomes established in a more or less numerous aristocracy, which will govern for its own advantage, leaving the people to die of hunger, if it refuses the bread of a prison.

Behold liberal England! put aside the small number of its eligible landed proprietors and electors, what do we see beneath this nation of princes? Fourteen millions of the working class, on whom industrialism imposes a servitude unknown to the negro slave of the colonies.* Beneath them, again, what do we find? Four millions of paupers, given up to destitution, for whom iron law fixes the limits beyond which they must not breathe.†

If there is anything certain in theory or in practice to the mind which is not blinded by irreligion, it is that human liberty and human dignity can find no secure protection, ex-

* This pre-eminence granted to the negroes, will not astonish those who, without having seen England, have read what the English and French writers agree in telling us, of the sad lot of the manufacturing population, and its frightful moral and physical degradation. This better condition is easily explained. It is for the interest of the planter to preserve his slaves as long as possible, in health and vigor; if they are ill, he is bound to take care of them. If they die he can only replace them at a great expense. It is not so with the head manufacturer. For him the operative is a hired machine, from whom he is to obtain the greatest possible amount of labor, at the least possible expense. His life is of slight importance; as soon as he is disabled, he may be cast aside, and others will come to take his place.

† The number of paupers in England, amounts to a sixth part of the whole population. (See *Econom. polit. chrét.*, by M. de Villeneuve, tom. ii.) M. the Baron Morogues, estimates it at a fourth and even a third. (*De la Misère des Ouvriers.*) (See *De l'action du Clergé dans la sociétés modernes*, ch. ii.,) by M. Rubichon, in which he speaks of the worse than barbarian English institutions, that take from the poor *the privilege of changing their residence.*

cept in the old distinction established by Catholicity between the spiritual and temporal power.

It is intellect which directs and governs the world. Produce in every mind, by a knowledge of the christian law, a uniform and deep conviction concerning the rights and duties of men, and the relations between subjects and rulers, confirm the public conscience in its love of virtue and its aversion for crime, by a firm faith in the inevitable and impending future, when one will be crowned and the other punished, so that the fear of men who have power only over the body, yields to the fear of him who can destroy eternally both body and soul; elevate this law and this belief above the assaults of the passions, by entrusting them to a hierarchy which, by its universally acknowledged divine character, its ramifications extending throughout the world, and the political independence of its head, will escape the overwhelming influence of temporal power; in a word, render a nation truly Catholic, and you will have raised an impregnable barrier against absolutism.

Only a moderate share of ability is needed by an ambitious and corrupted prince in order to trifle with paper charters, and bribe or intimidate the guardians of the public liberties. But how is he to violate the charter of justice and truth engraved on all minds and all hearts, and defended by a priesthood whose silence would be a crime which would call forth the reproaches of its head, and rouse the indignation of the Catholic world! A national religion is always under the control of the rulers of the nation; but how can they lay their hand upon the Catholic Church, without extending it over the whole universe? and this is not easily done.

I know that a servile spirit is not unfrequently found in some members of the clergy, and history only proves this too well.

The most Catholic of kingdoms saw, in 1682, a certain

number of her bishops, *assembled by order of the king*, assume, in opposition to the Holy See, the defence of a prince, who, arrived at the summit of glory, confiscated, in favor of a power already excessive, the last remains of civil and ecclesiastical liberties.* But this scandal, which the clergy of France were to expiate and repair with so much glory a century later, in the bosom of the Constituent Assembly, only proves the inevitable weakness of certain churches in presence of the temporal authority, and the absolute necessity for them, if they would resist its unjust demands, to remain firmly united to the centre of unity.

These local and temporary weaknesses should not prevent us from affirming that the Catholic religion is the only one in the world which has taught men firmly to resist the will of despots, without having recourse to insurrection or promoting anarchy.

It is a fact written in characters of blood on every page of christian history, from the hosts of heroes who marched to death rather than bend the knee before the crowned statues of the Roman emperors, to the Christians of our own times, defying at Tonquin all the fury of Min-Meh; and from St. Peter preaching the *good tidings*, in spite of the menaces of the Sanhedrim and the edicts of Nero, to Pius VII., opposing an indomitable courage to the giant who had triumphed over the forces, and thrown into desperation all the intrepidity of Europe.

Every one knows the long and desperate struggles of the priesthood of the middle ages against the material force, which, without it, would have crushed the last germ of civilization, and irrevocably buried Europe in servitude and barbarism!

* On the ecclesiastical and political bearing of the affair of *La Régale* and of the *Déclaration du Clergé*, which was the consequence of it. See M. de Maistre, (*De l'Eglise Gallicane dans ses rapports*, &c., liv. ii.)

But this portion of our ecclesiastical records are yet to be re-written, disfigured as it has been by many of our historians, who have written under the eye of parliaments. It is an extraordinary thing, that, while Catholic priests have deafened us with foolish lamentations over the alleged *aberrations of Pontifical power* in the middle ages, Protestant science, indignant at so much ignorance and meanness, seized the pen and wrote: *It is an assured fact, that, since the memory of man, there has not been a single example of a Pope who has attempted anything against those who have confined themselves to maintaining their rights, without intending to overstep the limits prescribed to them.** After dispelling the clouds which covered the noble figure of those Pontiffs, who have been the real educators of Europe and founders of that magnificent christian republic, admired even by Hume,† she has shown that, without the struggles of the Papacy against the empire, *all Europe would have fallen very early into one or many caliphats, and would have submitted as infallibly as disgracefully to Turkish sway, and to oriental oppression and stupefaction.‡*

Will it be said that the Church fought more for her own independence and privileges than for those of the people? This would be giving holdly the lie to history, which shows us that the ecclesiastical power of this epoch was the sole

* *Entretiens philosophiques sur la réunion des différentes communions chrétiennes*, by M. the Baron de Starck, p. 394.

† *History of the House of Tudor*, tom. ii. p. 9.

‡ M. de Starck, *Entretiens*, &c., p. 306. It must be acknowledged to our shame, said with reason the author of an excellent compilation, that we owe to strangers and Protestants the best works published on the Papacy: “*The History of the Life and Pontificate of Leo X.* by William Roscoe; *La Vie de Grégoire VII.*, by M. Voigt; *l’Histoire d’Innocent III., et ses contemporains*, by Hurter, &c.” (*Annales de Philosoph. chrétien.*, xvii. p. 250.)

and indefatigable defender of the weak and oppressed.* Besides, was not the cause of ecclesiastical immunities the cause of the people, at a time when the Church, which had become their asylum, offered the only approach to honors, wealth, and power.† Was it not effectually serving liberty and civilization to maintain in the bosom of feudal barbarism a society which, by opening its ranks to inferior conditions, elevated serfs to princes, defended the sacred doctrine of the unity of races, and protested against the anti-social classification of our race into lords and serfs, into men of rank and ciphers?

All liberties, moreover, are kindred. It is destroying despotism to teach temporal power that it is not omnipotent, that there are certain limits beyond which it cannot pass, under pain of finding itself disobeyed.

Let us suppose that, when Henry VIII., in order to exchange his lawful wife for a girl whom he afterwards condemned to death as a prostitute, declared himself head of the Church of England, that the clergy and magistracy, obedient to the voice of Rome, had opposed to him the unconquerable resistance of Cardinal Pole, Bishop Fisher, and Chancellor More, is it not evident that England would have preserved, with religious unity, her Magna Charter, and the noble privileges which she owed to her Catholic kings?

A Catholic parliament would never have condemned, *without form of law, to be hung and quartered, according to the good pleasure of the king*,‡ seventy thousand Englishmen of every condition, whose crime was having displeased the most

* This is the testimony of two men who cannot come under suspicion: M. Guizot, *Cours. d'Hist. moderne*, leçon vi., and M. Michelet, *Histoire de France*, liv. ii. ch. i.

† "Her salutary protection was extended to all; even those whom she did not ordain she covered with the protecting symbol of the tonsure. She became a vast asylum—an asylum for the conquered, the Romans and the serfs; the serfs rushed into the church." Michelet, *loc. cit.*

‡ These are the words of the sentence passed upon Anne Boleyn.

horrible monster who ever soiled the annals of Christian monarchies.

No Catholic nation would have abandoned to the accomplices, women, and scullions of that crowned ogre,* innumerable abbeys, hospitals, colleges and pious foundations, which were the resource of the poor, and whose suppression has produced an alarming number of paupers, whom the annual sum of two hundred and forty millions of francs hardly rescues from death.†

In order to corrupt a nation, and mould it into slavery, it must first be *un-Catholicized*. Tyrants have understood this admirably well, and it is, more than ever, necessary that the people too should thoroughly understand it.

CHAPTER L.

CONFIRMATION OF THE PRECEDING.—APPEALS OF THE EPISCOPATE IN FAVOR OF LIBERTY OF TEACHING.—UNIVERSITY QUESTION IN ITS TRUE LIGHT.—REFLECTIONS.

It is very important, for the maintainance of social equilibrium, that there should be men obliged, by their situation, to raise their voice against injustice, when fear closes other mouths; and, if these men can only employ prayer and the principles of reason and the Gospel, against the most iniquitous power, if they have no other sword to oppose to it than

* “ He carried so far this prodigality, that he gave the entire revenue of an Abbey to a woman, to reward her for making a pudding according to his taste.” (M. de Villeneuve, *Econom. polit.*, tom. ii. p. 431.)

† M. de la Borde, in his work, *De l'Esprit d'Association*, estimates at this sum the annual amount of the *poor rates*, including in it the expenses of collection. This is the direct territorial tax of England, (12,000,000,) multiplied by 20. (Ibid. liv. iv. ch. vii., tom. ii. p. 203.)

that of divine justice, if it is forbidden them to make an appeal to the passions, and to risk any other blood than their own, it is plain that they present the essential character elsewhere not to be found, of a wise opposition, which restrains despotism without unchaining anarchy.

Such is the Catholic priesthood, even when it is most isolated from the affairs of the times. It protects moral liberty, the mother of all other liberty, by maintaining the exclusive sovereignty of God over thought, and preventing intelligence from falling under the control of man.

If there remained any doubt on this subject, we need only cast our eyes over the glorious struggle which the French Episcopate is now sustaining (1847,) in favor of liberty, which is the dearest to a nation that believes in the existence and dignity of the soul.

Vainly did the university coterie, in order to defend the most odious of causes, endeavor to impose upon public opinion with regard to the scope of the debate. The subject is a vast one, on whatever side we view it. In the constitutional point of view, it stands thus: Will the charter which has sanctioned liberty of teaching prove a reality or a deception? Will the university monopoly, which was abolished in 1830,* be revived by a law, and the corporation which exercises it confiscate to its own advantage the public privileges solemnly granted in the fundamental compact, such as the equality of all before the law, the equal right of all to admittance to public offices, the liberty of worship and of conscience, the liberty of the press and of opinions, &c., liberties evidently decep-

* It has not been forgotten that, in 1830, the civil abolition of the university monopoly was a fact which the organs of power did not hesitate to recognise. "When we invoke the university monopoly, said M. the Attorney General Pusil, *in the legal process of the free school*, we lean on an expiring legislation, the abrogation of which we would hasten with our earnest wishes, &c.

tive, without liberty of worship and of conscience, liberty of the press and of opinions, &c., privileges evidently delusive without liberty of teaching?*

Considered more carefully still, and under all its phases, the question presents itself thus:

Shall the State, the government (that is, the individual whom a coterie may elevate to the presidency of the council of ministers), besides the power of administering what have been hitherto called political affairs, with that omnipotence which centralization gives, possess, also, the power of controlling the intellect, and arbitrarily ruling thought?

Will the State, which has already absorbed the communes and the department to the advantage of an absurd social unity, also annihilate the family, and, seizing the child when it leaves its nurse's arms, will it assume the right of saying to the father: "That being belongs to me; provide if you will for its material future, but it belongs to me to form its mind and heart!"

Will the State, which converts everything into gold, make the same use of knowledge? Will she put a tariff on science? Will she say to the poor man: "Since you are poor, renounce all idea of education and the hope of deliverance from your misery; if any one has the audacious charity to cherish your talents, I shall check him"? Will she say to families in easy circumstances: "I know that you regard my establishments for education as sinks of iniquity; but, if your children do not attend them, they will be excluded from all occupations"?

* Those who would still deceive themselves with regard to the desperate assaults which the university monopoly made on the public rights, guaranteed by the charter to all Frenchmen, can disabuse themselves by reading the spirited reflections of *un Ami de la Charte*. (See *La Charte-Vérité, ou le Monopole devant les Chambres*, Lyons, Janvier, 1844.)

Will the State, which has been made atheistical by the law, and indifferent to every religious belief, undertake the absurd mission of teaching religion to youth, or assume the right to educate, in infidelity, a nation which cannot, without suicide, cease to be christian? Can she say to six millions of parents, to whom she has guaranteed the free exercise of their religion: "I know the great influence of teachers over the minds and hearts of their pupils; I know that religion is always indifferent to the man whose youth has not been inspired by it; I intend, then, to entrust your children to masters who will, in various ways, inculcate upon them contempt for all religion"?

Will the State, in order to satisfy the low prejudices of a tyrannical faction, have a right to destroy the religion of the majority, by proscribing its dearest institutions? Armed with an inquisitorial power, will she boldly violate the asylum of conscience, and, in defiance of the fundamental laws of universal opinion, confound the religious Catholic in the same civil incapacity with the fugitive from justice, and the pardoned criminal!

In short, will the French nation fall under the power of a despotism without parallel, a Caliphate more degrading than that which oppresses the followers of the Prophet?

This is, indeed, the indelible disgrace which will be reserved for her, if the public authorities, intimidated by the

* This was the idea of Napoleon whose name is much used by the advocates of monopoly. Confiding his son to the care of Madame Montesquiou, (governess of the king of Rome,) whose rare virtues and deep piety he appreciated, he said to her: "Madame, I entrust to you my child, upon whom depend the destinies of France, and perhaps of all Europe; make a good Christian of him." Some one smiled at this; and the enraged Emperor at once turned to him and addressed him thus: "Yes, Sir, I know what I am saying, my son must be made a good Christian, for otherwise he cannot be a good Frenchman." (*Vie de Napoléon*, by M. Michaud, Biogr., tom. lxxv.)

clamors of a faction which publicly names itself revolutionary, imperialist, and Voltairean, remain deaf to the unanimous voice of the Bishops speaking in the name of Catholic France.

And what do these eighty Bishops demand, whose words, it would seem, have a little more power in the country than those of Villemain and Thiers? They demand what all independent minds, whatever may be their religious designation, demand, the free and loyal execution of the fundamental compact.

It is a singular fact that the same clergy who were for a long time accused of a secret antipathy to the charter, now take upon themselves the defence of it, and with wonderful energy solicit the natural and indispensable fulfilment of it! It is the same clergy who were called the friends of privilege and exception, who are now resisting with all their power, privilege and exclusiveness, and demand liberty for all.

They are accused of taking upon themselves the charge of education, and it is even feared that they may monopolise it; but even if their penury did not render this fear absurd, what means have they of rendering their co-operation with the University formidable, except the confidence inspired by their knowledge and virtue. Would such competition involve anything disastrous for the state? Would France be in peril, if many heads of families preferring for the education of their children the ministers of Jesus Christ to the followers of Voltaire, the University should be itself brought back to the principles of Christian instruction.

What, in fact, is proposed by excluding the clergy from the education of youth? Is it thought possible to form religious men without the ministry of the priesthood, or govern a nation of atheists. If the generation which in ten years will constitute the French nation, remains subject to a teaching, the immorality and irreligion of which are proved by an overwhelming body of facts to which nothing has been opposed

but calumnious recrimination and insolent denial,* what hand in ten years will be able to hold the reins of France?

Napoleon himself did not believe it possible to re-organize alone a society dissolved by Voltaire and Rousseau, and esteeming his sword too light to balance so many unchained passions, he summoned religion to the re-construction of the State. Do the men of July believe themselves more powerful than he?

It excites an indescribable pity to see the presumption of pretended statesmen who, after adding humiliation to humiliation, as the great captain added victory to victory, cast contempt and disdain on that religion whose co-operation they claimed, and boldly proclaim from the midst of a society in ashes: "Let the priest guard their altars, we and our brave followers will guard the state and the throne!"

This was said more than sixty years since when the Bishops of France vainly contended with the rulers, that the altar was indispensable to the support of the throne and of public liberty. Are the events of that time already forgotten. The altar was scarcely shaken, when the axe of the revolution splintered the oldest throne of Europe, and five hundred thousand swords protected the scaffold on which the heads of kings, deputies, ministers, soldiers, citizens and priests were thrown in confusion.

* This is in fact the only answer given, to this day, to the formal act of accusation drawn up by the courageous author of the *Monopole universitaire destructeur de la Religion et des Lois*, and whoever has read the work, will acknowledge that the defenders of the University were compelled to choose between silence and abuse.

CHAPTER LI.

EXTERNAL WORSHIP.—ITS NECESSITY.—BEAUTY OF THE CATHOLIC WORSHIP.—NULLITY OF PROTESTANT WORSHIP.—IT IS ILLOGICAL.—VAIN EFFORTS TO RESTORE IT TO LIFE.

RELIGION must assume a form if it would interest man, and be apprehended by him. Eternal truth was compelled to incarnate itself in order to subject itself to our sensual intelligence. Her revelations would soon vanish, if entrusted to a book, and confined within the dreamy regions of the individual thought, they were not embodied in the living words of pastors, and the animated forms of public worship.

Endowed with understanding, imagination and sentiment, the soul naturally feels the need of *translating*, and expressing the interior results of its three faculties, by words, images and action. To forbid it the very expressive language of signs and symbols, is doing violence to nature, and destroying thought and feeling; for thought is neither well conceived, nor developed, nor preserved without the aid of expression, and symbols; feeling can neither live nor communicate nor perpetuate itself without its offspring—gesture.

The human mind expanded, ennobled and spiritualised by the sublime and touching faith of Christianity must re-produce it in various ways, and demand from the fine arts, expressions, images, and ceremonials worthy of the elevation of its thoughts, the grandeur of its affections, its hopes and fears. A glorious reflection of the light *which enlightens every man coming into this world*, the christian worship must be *Catholic* and universal, and surpass other worships by the variety, harmony and beauty of its forms, as Christian thought surpasses all other thought. This it has done. Are not the noblest inspirations of eloquence, poetry, music, architecture, painting and sculpture, both Christian and Catholic?

This is acknowledged; homage is paid to the beauties of the Catholic worship,* to the immense impulse it has given at all periods to the fine arts. Hence philosophy with reason accuses Protestantism of having disavowed and brutally violated by its false spiritualism one of the first laws of human nature. The lover of the beautiful demands of it an account of the master-pieces which its vandalism has destroyed, and for those which it has checked in their birth, by proscribing the great vehicle of genius—imagination.† Religious men reproach it with having dethroned piety by taking from it its finest ornaments.

We must observe, however, with regard to this last reproach,

* “It must be acknowledged,” says a Protestant minister, “that the Catholic liturgy is incomparable, and that nothing is more desirable than to approach it as nearly as possible. When we enter those vast basilicks, at the moment of the celebration of the offices, with that beautiful Gregorian music, which with the sound of instruments, fills the whole extent of these immense edifices, and see here and there those images of the prophets, saints, and seraphim, with their harps and trumpets, that old priest with white locks, who entones the stanzas from the depth of the sanctuary, those acolytes with their censers, and the eagle rising towards heaven from the midst of the choristers, we experience really the power of music and the language of religious signs. Separated for a moment from the things of earth, we believe ourselves transported into the midst of a vision of the Apocalypse. This is a public worship worthy of Christianity, and of the gratitude of a refined people who are indebted to it for their civilization.” (M. Muller, *Des Beaux Arts et de la Langue des Signes*, &c., p. 116.)

† “By subtracting the imagination from the faculties of man, it, (the Reformation,) clipped the wings of genius and set it on its feet. Goethe and Schiller did not appear until Protestantism, abjuring its dry and morose spirit, returned towards the arts and subjects of the Catholic religion. This last has covered the world with her monuments. Protestantism sprung up just three centuries ago; it prevails in England, Germany, and America; it is practised by millions of men. What has it constructed? It will show the ruins it has made, among which it has planted some gardens or established some manufactures.” (Chateaubriand, *Etudes Histor.*, preface.

that it is easy for the Reformation to justify itself by replying that its fundamental principle necessarily excludes public worship, and that its only error in the matter is having preserved some fragments of it.

Indeed public worship being only the expression of public belief or the symbolic language of the common faith, what can be the public worship where there is neither common faith, nor public belief, except a criminal mockery!

The Bible, and a silent Bible, is the only religious symbol which Protestants can permit in their temples; for religious assemblies are very inconsistent with a religion which is essentially individual.

Thus, nothing is more perfectly ridiculous than the enthusiasm of certain devotees of Germany and elsewhere, for the restoration of Protestant worship. It certainly will be very easy to re-establish in their temples what Protestantism formerly demolished as an obstacle *to the adoration in spirit and in truth*, as an abominable invention of the Roman anti-Christ.

Images, statues of Jesus Christ, of the Apostles, the Cross, candelabras and the censer will be restored. The organ will mingle its majestic sounds with the voice of the choristers; a minister after many invectives against the papist mass, will ascend the steps of a pretended altar, clothed with a sort of chasuble, and offer an imitation of a sacrifice; after which, turning towards those present, he will invite them to come and receive from the same hand, some the figure, others the reality of the body of Christ.

These are the signs of life with which a dead body might be surrounded in a chapel; but to make Protestantism move, preach, sing, sigh and pray is radically impossible; a corpse does nothing of all that.

It will be said: This is at least an edifying spectacle. Spectacle it may be: but not edifying. Nothing can be less edifying than a solemn public falsehood connected with mat-

ters of religion. As a spectacle, such a worship has not, like profane spectacles, the advantage of interesting the public by representing to them the passions whose language every one comprehends. Exhibiting a religion which belongs to no one, what can it be but an unintelligible pantomime, a phantasmagoria no less sacrilegious than absurd? And moreover, what attracts to these temples but the charm of solitude?*

CHAPTER LII.

OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE CATHOLIC WORSHIP.—MULTIPLICITY OF CEREMONIES.—USE OF LATIN.

I shall speak elsewhere of the civilizing influence of Catholic worship. I would here notice three reproaches that are cast upon it. 1st, for multiplying its rites and ceremonies so much as to conceal the substance under an oppressive mass of forms; 2d. for employing in its Liturgy a language unknown to the people; 3d. for giving too high a place to the creature in an institution which has God for its object—(by this the worship of the Saints, and particularly of Mary, is intended.)

I shall not give much attention to the first two objections, upon which far less weight is laid since there has been an opportunity of estimating the moral and artistic effect of Liturgies in the vulgar tongue, and in a worship with scanty rites.

If instead of condemning from the elevation of their igno-

* *Stoves are necessary in Protestant temples*, said a lively traveller, M. Veuillot, *Pèlerinage en Suisse*, tom. i., p. 27. Very well for winter! but in summer? Perhaps ices may sometimes be distributed there!

rance, the numerous ceremonies of the Catholic worship, the objectors would take the pains to penetrate the deep significance of them and study their vast and wonderful symbolism, they would see that everything is perfectly connected in this beautiful system, that every part has its reason and also its effect, and that the skill with which the Church has introduced so great a variety into the very limited plan of its Liturgy cannot be sufficiently admired.

Indeed, what do we find in this series of mysterious pictures which it presents to our eye in the course of the year? Nothing less than the history of the world, from the Word which created heaven and earth, to the Word which is to produce *a new heaven, and a new earth*;—the history of the Redeemer, from the day he was promised to guilty man, to the day when he will receive into his glory the last, in time, of the elect; the history of the christian Church, from the period when it was sighing in the catacombs, to the final period when pursued into the depths of the deserts by triumphant impiety, it will see the banner of the spouse unfurled in heaven and will entone an eternal Hosannah!

If the Catholic ceremonies are generally considered beautiful and imposing by those who only comprehend the material part of them, what effect would they not produce on those who really understood the spirit of them! Would the longest office leave room for *ennui* if those present could follow the thought of the Church?

Very few Christians indeed are sufficiently well instructed to enjoy the internal beauties of the worship; but because many are too short-sighted to comprehend the whole extent of this vast edifice, is ~~this~~ a reason that the Church should demolish it? In an age like ours when so much is said of the brotherhood of nations; when wonderful inventions annihilate distances and promise to make of the whole world only one city, is there not some grandeur in the idea, vainly

cherished by Leibnitz,* of a universal language, which while diffusing the alphabets of every nation over the world, should also bestow upon it all the philosophers, historians, literati and learned men, whom antiquity and our ancient Europe can number? Would not its realisation be an immense step towards the union of human families?

This miracle has been worked long since by the Catholic Church. Thanks to its contempt for the ridicule of heretics and the blind counsels of some of its children, the elders of all the nations of the globe now speak the language of Cicero, Virgil, Livy, Tertullian, St. Augustine, Kepler, Descartes and Newton.

Must not such a result, which the Church alone could obtain by rendering obligatory the use of Latin in its Liturgy, show the disadvantage of singing the praises of God in a language which is understood only by a few, especially if it is easy to remedy this disadvantage by translations which are in all hands and by the oral explanations of the priest.

The following is the problem presented to the Church in view of thousands of people who were divided by language more than by space:

Must she procure for these nations the immense advantage of understanding each other, by establishing the same religious language, at the risk that by inattention and ignorance a few of the words should be lost which she addresses to God in the name of this vast family; or would it be better for the good pleasure of those who cannot or will not read their prayers at Mass that she should herself adopt the three thousand five hundred idioms which the world speaks, and leave these nations forever mute, and without the means of communication with each other?

Have those who so lightly condemn the solution which

* See *Esprit de Leibnitz, langue universelle*, tom. iv. p. 202.

Rome has given to this problem, ever considered or even looked at it!

"What a sublime idea," exclaims M. de Maistre, "is that of a universal language for the Universal Church! From the North Pole to the South, the Catholic who enters into a church of his own ritual is at home and nothing is strange in his eyes. On arriving he hears what he has heard all his life; and he can mingle his voice with those of his brethren. He understands them, they understand him; he can exclaim: "Rome is entire in all places; the whole of her is found where I am."

"The corruption of the age seizes continually certain words, and spoils them for its amusement. If the Church spoke our language, some bold free-thinker would be sure to render the most sacred word of the Liturgy either ridiculous or indecent. On every account the religious language should be put beyond the power of man."*

CHAPTER LIII.

WORSHIP OF SAINTS.—WHY REJECTED BY PROTESTANTISM. FOUNDATION OF THIS WORSHIP.

MOST Protestants at length candidly acknowledge that the Catholic Church does not adore and has never adored the saints, and the absurd accusation of idolatry is no longer met with except in the scandalous pamphlets of the Bosts, Malans, Monods and other traffickers in the scurrility of the old Reformation. But we are reproached with giving to the saints too high a place in our worship. Might we not ask of them in our turn why they have not given them any?

In their religious system, what has become of the great

* *Du Pape*, liv. i. ch. 20.

family of the children of God, united forever by the indissoluble ties of charity, and the elder brethren of which, fortunate possessors of the celestial inheritance, employ their credit with the common Father for the benefit of their brethren who are still engaged in the conflicts of life?

Was this consoling interchange of honors and merits, of prayers and intercessions, between the inhabitants of earth and those of heaven, a belief which all Christian antiquity professed in the creed by the expression *communion of saints*, was it so offensive to God and injurious to men, as the pretended Reformers affirmed it to be? We must acknowledge, however, that in this they showed themselves perfectly consistent with their principles.

How could those who repudiate the visible hierarchy by which Christ transmits to us his words and his sacraments, how could they accept the invisible hierarchy which bears our supplications to the foot of the eternal throne, and brings down from it streams of grace? Since God deigns to converse with each of us and has appointed no one to explain to us his word, why should we commission any one to present to him our demands? If he speaks to us without an interpreter, will he not hear us without an intercessor?

Sad reasoning this, which separating the individual from his kind, under pretext of uniting him more closely with God, converts him into a savage as isolated from God as from men; for it is written: Wo to him who is alone?*

And on what do these miserable cavillers depend in order to destroy the magnificent spiritual city which faith offers to our homage and our love; an immense city, of which God and his Christ are the chief, the corner-stone, of which Mary is the Queen; of which angels, prophets, apostles and all the blessed are in different degrees the ministers, the high officials, the adult citizens; of which we ourselves are the new-

* Eccles. iv. 10.

born, still hovering between life and death?* Is it on the Bible, to which they incessantly appeal? But the Bible everywhere represents to us God surrounded with his angels and saints, as so many ministers and counsellors; † honoring them with the name of friends; ‡ making their names a title of glory; § seating them on his throne, associating them in the exercise of his sovereignty as he associates them with the joys which the earth offers him; || placing individuals, cities and kingdoms under their guardianship.¶

They seem to fear debasing God in the eyes of men by elevating the saints! This shows a very great ignorance of God and man. What more sad, or less benevolent than this isolated God, jealous of reform, eclipsing the saints by the brilliancy of his glory, instead of making them shine as suns,** and compelling them to be only automata in his presence.

Transport the sun into empty space, extinguish those floods of light with which he enriches our planet, how will he appear to the eye of man! It is the earth which makes us admire the sun, and it is *in his saints* that God would render himself admirable.††

To allow the blessed an active part in the Divine government, would be assuming, according to the objectors, that the hand of the Most High is not strong enough to hold alone the sceptre of the world.

What bar-room philosophy! Did it ever enter into the

* Ephes. ii. 19, 20; Hebr. i. 14; I. Peter ii. 2.

† Daniel vii. 10; III. Kings xxii. 19, 4.

‡ Ps. cxxxviii. 17.

§ Exod. iii. 16.

|| Sap. iii. 8; Apoc. iii. 21.

¶ Daniel vii. 16; ix. 21; x. 13; xii. 1; Luke xv. 17.

** *Justi fulgebunt sicut sol.* (Matth. xiii. 43.)

†† *Mirabilis Deus in sanctis suis.* (Ps. lxvii. 36.)

mind of the Christian, however uninstructed, that God, by associating the saints in his government, proposed rather to relieve himself by it than to glorify them? What ignorance would this show of Scripture and of man! These wise students of the Bible do not know that the Heaven which Jesus Christ promises us, is the kingdom of his Father, his own throne, whose heirs we are, conjointly with him.* They were ignorant of the promise which he made to his Apostles and their followers to associate them in the power he had received to judge the world, and the invitation which he has given us *to make friends* in Heaven who are capable of opening for us its gates.† They regard, then, these thrones virtues, powers, dominations and principalities, with which Scripture peoples heaven, as so many sinecures.

In a word, they have never read the heart of man. Is not the unbounded ambition which agitates it, its insatiable thirst for grandeur and power, plain proofs of our vocation for the supreme empire? Who would wish for heaven, if the felicity enjoyed there were only an eternal idleness.

What do the Reformers oppose to this collection of biblical and philosophical proofs, which not only justify the worship that we render to the saints, but would tend to lead us to look upon it as necessary, if the Catholic Church had not limited itself to declaring it *good* and *useful*?‡ A few passages of Scripture, among others that of St. Paul: "For there is one God, and one Mediator of God and men, the man Christ Jesus."§ To have recourse to the intercession of saints, it is said, is to recognise many mediators, and do an injury to Jesus Christ; what can be more evident?

But what they answer will be given to the following exactly similar reasoning! Christ has said: Call none your

* Romans viii. 17.

† Matth. xix. 28; Luke xvi. 9.

‡ *Council Trent*, Sess. xxv.

§ I. Timoth. ii. 5.

father upon earth : for one is your Father who is in heaven : * then the child who gives to the author of his days the name of father, and pays him the obedience and honor attached to this title, violates the law of Christ, insults God, and assails his Divine descent.

It will, doubtless, be answered, that the honors rendered to the fathers of this world, far from being derogatory to the Heavenly Father who expressly commands them,† are agreeable to him and terminate in him, human paternity being only a flowing out or a visible image of the Divine paternity ; and as God when he connects parents with the creation of the child, gives them a share in the rights and honors of paternity, on condition, however, that the child should honor his parents and adore God alone, the only true author of life ; so it is this title only and the absolute authority which is derived from it, which Jesus Christ, in the text above quoted, claims for our Heavenly Father.

Such is also our answer to the objection drawn from the words of the Apostle.—In honoring the saints it is God whom we honor, the author of their glory, and who wishes to be glorified in them.‡ We openly avow that the favor which they enjoy, as well as the graces which they obtain for us, are the fruit of the blood of Jesus Christ. To pray them to employ this favor, to second our petitions, and to think that their prayers will be more acceptable than ours, would it be doing an injury to the Supreme Mediator, or rather is it not rendering glory to him ? Nothing is more to the glory of Jesus Christ than having peopled heaven with the dispensers of his favors ; nothing so much displays the infinite riches of his merits as the privilege he allows to millions of drawing perpetually upon them.

Finally, the Protestant must concede to the Apostles during

* Matth. xxiii. 9.

† Exod. xx. 12.

‡ II. Thessal. i. 10.

their mortal life that benevolent intervention between Christ and men, which he refuses to the saints.

It is evident from Scripture that Christ had established them as his *ministers*, his *plenipotentiaries*, the *dispensers of his gifts*, the *fathers of souls*, his *coadjutors* in the redemption of the world, and that they had in these different qualities, a right to the homage, to the respect, to the submission and confidence of all Christians.* It is evident also that they were the organs, the petitioners of men near God and that they regarded prayer as their most important function.†

But could death destroy those glorious relations which connected the Christian society with its founders? While giving to Jesus Christ and his Church the greatest proof of love by the effusion of their blood, would the Apostles have lost the glorious mission of enlightening and saving the world, and their right to the admiration, love and gratitude of men?‡

While associating them in his glory, would Christ have excluded them from a share in his solicitude for that Church which was won by his blood, but edified and cemented by their labors and their martyrdom? Would that zeal which made them eager to be cursed for their brethren§ be extinguished in the bosom of eternal charity? Could their prayer, so effectual to restore the dead to life, be now without value before God? In short, could they be in heaven only a vain shadow of what they were on earth. Who would dare to think it!

I have sufficiently proved, it seems to me, that the total neglect of the saints in the Protestant worship is entirely at variance with Scripture and the general spirit of Christianity.—I will now show, in a few words, that it is no less objectionable in a philosophical and moral point of view.

* Matth. x. 14; Mark xvi. 16; Luke x. 16; I. Cor. iii. 9; II. Cor. v. 20

† Act. Ap. vi. 4. ‡ Matth. v. 13, 14. § Rom. ix. 3.

CHAPTER LIV.

NATURAL FOUNDATION FOR THE WORSHIP OF SAINTS.—ITS
MORAL INFLUENCE.

AMONG the noble instincts which do honor to the heart of man, we should place in the first rank the need which he naturally feels of offering the homage of respect and veneration to noble and virtuous actions.

To celebrate the memory of men who have deserved well of their kind by the exhibition of lofty virtues, by their teachings, or by the establishment of wise and useful institutions, is at the same time a debt of gratitude and a great incitement to virtue. "The honors rendered to heroes," a christian philosopher has said, "are the best encouragement to heroism." * The nation which does nothing to perpetuate the remembrance of its great men, is without its most necessary institution, a school of virtue. But this nation does not exist and never has existed.

Every nation has its heroes and its sages, whose practice and precepts she proposes as a model to succeeding generations, the respect which she bears them extends to everything which recalls their memory; to their mortal remains, to the spot which gave them birth, the places where they have lived and died, to their images, their statues, and even their articles of household use. The worship of illustrious men, of relics and of images is as ancient, and as universal as the human race; it is then legitimate in its principle; and makes a part of the laws of humanity.

Without doubt, men have abused this law as all others. Pagan antiquity was grossly deceived in the choice of its heroes and more grossly still in the worship which it rendered

* St. Aug. *Serm.* 47, *de Sanct.*

them. The material force which arbitrarily ruled the earth, appropriated to its own advantage the honors of the apotheosis. The *Sacred Way* which conducted the ravagers of the world to the Capitol, became the only road to Heaven.

Christianity did justice to this monstrous worship. It reserved to God alone the supreme honors of adoration; but instead of changing God into a monarch inaccessible to human weakness, jealous of maintaining the infinite distance which separates him from the creature, it represented him as an infinitely good Father who loves to surround himself with men as with his children, and who subjects them for a few days to the painful trials of life, only to associate them with his glory, his power, and his joy in the kingdom which will have no end.

What is Heaven according to Scripture? It is the house of the father of the family; it has places for every one, for every one is called to its enjoyment. What is necessary to enter it? It is sufficient to love God and man sincerely; this is the whole law. The love of God and of our neighbor carried to perfection, that is to say, to forgetfulness of self, constitutes the christian hero and gives a claim to the highest place. If the condition is difficult, it does not exceed the power of any one. Is there any one who cannot prefer God to everything and his neighbor to himself.

What higher morality than to direct all our ambition towards promoting the glory of God and the happiness of man! What an easy condition, within the power of every one, for attaining the first rank! What better adapted to excite a universal enthusiasm!

But this teaching, to become efficacious, must be realized before the eyes of men. As worship only attains its end, which is to inspire the sentiment of adoration, when it recalls the sovereignty of God by its grandeur and pomp; so teaching could only attain its end, which is to excite in man

the aspiration to sanctity, by presenting to his eyes the brilliancy of the celestial crown. God must appear in his temple as he presents himself to our thought, as he will show himself to us at the Last Day, surrounded with the glorious company of Saints.

This is done by the Catholic Church. She excites and maintains a holy emulation among her children, by inviting them every day to meditate on the example, and celebrate the triumphs of those among them whom heaven and earth have called with one voice to take their place upon her altars.

What eloquent preachers, are those heroes of every age, of either sex, of every condition, who say to each one: We were what you are; it depends on yourself soon to become what we are, and even greater; for the seed-time which has passed for us, still promises you rich harvests?

I do not wish to discuss here the validity of the reasons according to which the Church decrees to a saint the honors of public worship. Whoever knows, and every one can know, the slow processes of these matters at Rome, the publicity which she is bound to give them, the extreme severity of her examinations, and the multiplicity of proofs which she demands,* will avow without hesitation, that every precaution has been taken against the sad, but happily unheard of necessity in the Roman Church, of deposing a saint.†

* An English Protestant being at Rome, a Prelate with whom he was intimate, showed him an official report containing the examination of several miracles. After having read it with much attention, he said, as he returned it: "If all the miracles that are received in the Roman Church were established on proofs as indisputable as these, we should have no difficulty in receiving them." "Well!" answered the Prelate, "of all those miracles which appear to you so well authenticated, none has been admitted by the Congregation of Rites, because they were not considered as satisfactorily proved." (*Vie de St. J. F. Regis*, by Father Daubenton, book iv.)

† The head of the Russian Church has just given this unheard of

To one who doubts the miracles by which God signalises the triumphant entry of a hero into heaven, and invites men to unite their acclamations to those of the blessed, I would say : Reflect for a moment, and you will see even in the worship of the saints a much more astonishing miracle than those which you refuse to believe.

That the Church should obtain the honors of public worship for kings, pontiffs, and popular men, who have died surrounded by the testimonies of universal veneration, has nothing in it surpassing human power. But that she should have been able to raise from the dust to the altar, obscure men, slaves, servants, herdsmen, laborers, poor artisans, and mendicants ; that she should have brought emperors, kings, and nobles to bow before the remains of these dregs of creation, to transform the huts they inhabited into sumptuous temples, and to choose them for the protectors of their capitals and their estates,* this is humanly speaking inexplicable.

But I wish to examine here only the moral effect of these *apotheoses*. It is immense. Nothing could be imagined more adapted to preserve the great from pride, the humble from

example of the public degradation of a saint. Ten years since the Emperor Nicholas solemnly canonised a certain person named Metrophanes, created him knight of all the orders of the State, ornamented his tomb with the different decorations of these orders, and instituted by a public ukase a festival in his honor, to be celebrated throughout the empire. But afterwards the researches of some learned men proved to a demonstration that Metrophanes had been a robber on the highway, and that for this reason, according to an ancient custom of the Russians, he had been thrown into a monastery, to undergo perpetual imprisonment. Consequently, last year the Emperor caused him to be degraded in the same manner, depriving him of all his decorations, and publishing a new ukase to prohibit his worship. (*Annales de Philos. chrét.* tom. xxiv. p. 391.)

* It is sufficient to cite St. Genevieve, a shepherdess, patron of Paris. St. Isidore a laborer, patron of Madrid. St. Zita, a servant girl, patroness of Lucca. St. Benezet, a shepherd, patron of Avignon, &c.

abjectness, to inspire them with the reciprocal sentiments of esteem and charity, and to recall to them that they are brothers, and that before God virtue is the only nobility.

The world which is all error and corruption * has also its heroes and its festivals. History, poetry, and the fine arts, celebrate in a thousand ways the triumphs of pride, ambition, cupidity, and luxury. What would become of society if religion did not oppose the worship of all the virtues to the apotheosis of all the vices.

Admiration is a want that must be satisfied: take from it its legitimate aliment, the spectacle of great virtues, it will attach itself to great crimes. In those places where Protestantism has overthrown the statues of christian heroes, irreligion and cynicism have raised them in honor of their apostles. The crowns which the Genevese youth formerly offered at the feet of Christ and his mother, it now offers to the author of the *Nouvelle Heloise* and of the *Confessions*. The visits to the sanctuary of the Queen of Virgins have given place to the pilgrimage of Ferney.

Those who imagine that the Reformers of the sixteenth century are profound thinkers, who have *promoted the progress of the human mind*, grossly deceive themselves. Strangers to the knowledge of man as to that of christianity, they were only iconoclasts, and, like savages, had nothing in common but the genius of destruction. The outrages inflicted by their hands on the monuments of Christian art, are only a feeble image of the barbarous devastations made by their pen in a higher department.

* I. John v. 19.

CHAPTER LV.

UNITY OF THE HUMAN FAMILY.—MISSION AND FUNCTIONS OF ADAM AND EVE.—THEIR FALL.—CHOICE OF A NEW MAN AND A NEW WOMAN.—UNIVERSAL EXPECTATION OF THE VIRGIN-MOTHER.—SALUTATION OF THE ARCHANGEL TO MARY.

God has chosen to form one family of the human race: a father and mother were needed for this family.

Adam and Eve were at first invested with this high dignity, and it would be strangely degrading their office to limit it to the propagation of the race.

In the plan of the Creator, Adam is not a man, but *the man*, the head, the king of humanity; he holds in his hands the eternal destinies of his innumerable children. His was the sublime mission of conducting them to the abodes of glory through the way of obedience; his, the terrible power of ruining them eternally by associating them in his rebellion!

God gives him support that he may not sink under the weight of such a responsibility.

The influence of woman in the family is incalculable. If man is its head, woman is its heart. His is the reason which guides to wisdom and happiness; hers, the feeling which inspires the one and produces the other. If she charms and doubles by her virtues the existence of her husband,* what blessings does she not pour out upon her children! The least, perhaps, is to bear them a few months in her bosom; she bears them all her life on her heart. She lives, she breathes only for them. Their joys are her joys, their griefs are her griefs. Her inventive tenderness has consolation for

* Mulieris bonæ beatus vir: numerus enim annorum illius duplex. (Eccles. xxvi. 1.)

all sorrow, remedies for all woes, and she always soothes those which she cannot heal. As her hand is soft and delicate for the cares which the body demands, so are her words insinuating and subtle to penetrate into the windings of the soul. The lessons which the father addresses to the intellect, she impresses upon the heart; she possesses the art of transforming precepts into virtuous habits, knowledge into feeling and truth into love.

Woman, mistress of the heart, is the strongest link in the family tie. Has the child defied paternal authority? the father has but one feeling, that of indignation; one thought, that of punishment. The justice which he consults before anything else, demands rigid satisfaction as the preliminary of pardon. That pride which has misled the child, prevents him from submitting; fear keeps him at a distance. The separation would be eternal, if the mother were not there to open the heart of the criminal to repentance, and that of the father to clemency. If the sight of the fugitive excites a half-extinguished anger, the mother interposes, and the tempest dies away before this sun of gentleness.

The mediation of the religious mother is not less powerful with God. Borne on the wings of faith and love, sentiments which predominate in her, her prayers quickly reach the Divine heart. Read the lives of the saints; you will find few who have not imbibed virtue with their mother's milk, or who have not been led back to God by the counsels, the example and the prayers of a virtuous mother. The heart is the whole of man, and a good heart is the work of a good mother.

Such was to be the sublime office of the first woman in the midst of the immense family, of which she was to be the mother; and it is with reason that she received from man a name synonymous with *life*.*

What an accession of glory and power she would have

* Genes. iii. 20.

acquired for herself and for her husband, if, faithful to her mission, she had sustained him in the struggle against the tempter and decided his triumph as she decided his defeat! All the generations of humanity would have hailed, from age to age, by a unanimous cry of gratitude and love, the two beings to whom, next to God, they were indebted for life and happiness, Adam would have been the *blessed of the nations*, Eve the woman eternally blessed.

What influence would they not have exercised over God by their prayers, when confirmed in his love by a first victory or series of victories, the consequence of the first, they would have occupied themselves only with the fate of their children who were still subjected to temptation! If we imagine that one among them had yielded to it, is it not indubitable that he would have found in Adam and Eve powerful and victorious intercessors? If the prayer of Moses could annul the decree of death which had gone forth against his people,* how could God resist the supplications of the Parents of the human race, seconded by the prayers of their children who had remained faithful?

These blessed relations with God and their posterity, Adam and Eve lost with their innocence. Instead of imparting life to the soul and body, they transmitted double death to the soul and body. But if they changed their office God did not change his design.

It was the will of God to restore the human family who had been ruined by the rebellion of its head, by giving it a new head. As we have received death by the disobedience of the first Adam, we must find life in the obedience of the second. It was by woman that Satan triumphed over man; it is by woman that man will triumph over Satan.

Let us listen to God himself as he announces to the two criminals the choice which he has made of a new man and a

* Rom. v. 12.

new woman. Addressing the conqueror, *this warfare which thou thinkest to have terminated to thy own advantage*, said he, *I will enkindle between thee and the woman, between thy race and hers ; she shall break thy head.** If the Christian world has constantly recognised Christ the Redeemer, in this race of the woman destined to crush the empire of the devil ; it must also recognise the Mother of Christ in the promised woman.

We see Mary, then, at the head of the new struggle in which hell will be subdued, as Eve has been the first in the attack in which man fell.

The consoling promise, received with joy by our unfortunate parents, is transmitted from generation to generation and during four thousand years, all nations are waiting for the blessed Virgin Mother who bears in her bosom the salvation of the world.†

The race of Jacob sigh more than others for the *Star* which was to rise upon it.‡ The prophets of the Lord, gave them glimpses, from time to time, by the most touching images of that *woman who will conceive by a prodigy new upon the earth.§* Here, it is a *stem that rises* bearing a *divine flower ; ||* there, it is *the earth opened by heaven where the Savior buds.¶*

The nation was just sinking under the blows of two formidable enemies. God sent it a prophet to raise its courage ; and what does he announce ? *Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel.*** Like a good father he consoles his family by saying to them : Courage, my children, your mother is coming !

At length the time is accomplished ; the desired of nations arrives, but unknown yet to men and to herself ; the Most High is about to reveal to the world its deliverer, and to

* Gen. iii. 15.

† Voy. *Troisième lettre*, de M. Drach, à ses coreligionnaires.

‡ Num. xxiv. 17.

§ Jerem. xxxi. 22.

|| Isa. xi. 1.

¶ Ibid. xiv. 8.

** Ibid. vii. 14.

Mary the prodigies of mercy which he designs to perform in her and by her.

Ye who accuse us of elevating Mary too high, listen to the words of the Celestial Messenger, addressed to the Virgin of Nazareth.

*Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; Blessed art thou among women. Behold thou shalt conceive and bring forth a son; and thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High, &c.. &c.**

What are all the praises which the Church has always decreed to Mary, whether in its prayers, by the mouth of its preachers, or the pen of its writers, except a faint commentary on the words of the Archangel? What are the honors which it renders her, and the sentiments of gratitude, love and confidence with which it inspires us for her, if not the natural and legitimate consequence of the incomprehensible dignity to which God has elevated her, and the innumerable blessings which we have received by her interposition.

But in order better to conceive, as far as it is permitted to our weakness, the greatness of the new Woman and its claim upon our homage, let us resume the parallel of the two Eves

CHAPTER LVI.

PARALLEL OF EVE AND MARY.—PRE-EMINENCE OF MARY
OVER THE FIRST WOMAN.—HER CLAIM TO THE
TITLE OF MOTHER OF MEN.

WE have seen that the mission of the first woman was great and full of dignity in the eyes of God and man; but it was conservative, and on that account easy to fulfil. In order

* Luke i. 28, et seq.

to guard herself from the seductions of hell, and rescue from it her children who were born with virtuous inclinations, Eve needed only a common degree of wisdom and virtue.

The work entrusted to the new Woman, on the contrary, was one of great difficulty. If Divine omnipotence was required in the hands of the Son to overthrow the throne of Satan, which had been strengthened by a reign of forty centuries, and lead back into the way of holiness a world which worshipped every vice, did not the Mother need a boundless charity, she who was to gather into her bosom numberless generations of wretched beings who were cast by Adam and Eve upon an accursed world!

God, who always proportions the power of the means to the greatness of the end, would necessarily show himself lavish of his grace towards Mary, and if the author of Ecclesiasticus tells us that Eve received it in large measure* the Archangel Gabriel teaches us that Mary had received it in its plenitude.† As the new Adam, descending from heaven, must surpass Adam formed from the clay of the earth, in the same proportion (save the infinite distance which exists between the uncreated Being and the creature) the Virgin destined to be the mother of the God-Man must surpass the virgin drawn from the side of man. Indeed, only a little attention is necessary to what Scripture teaches us of both, to comprehend the vast difference which separates them.

In the plan of creation, Eve is represented only in the second rank. Adam existed and had received the investiture of the world and the law of God, before she appeared. She came forth from the side of Adam and was given him as a companion. It is Adam from whom she learns her origin and her destiny and from whom she receives her name.‡

In the plan of re-generation the woman occupies the first rank. *I will put enmities between thee and the woman, &c.*

* Eccclus. xvii.

† Luke i. 28.

‡ Gen. ii. 23, 24.

—*A Virgin will conceive, &c.*—In the gospel, Mary appears before Jesus. She does not come forth from the side of the God-Man, but the God-Man is conceived and formed in her chaste body; she could say to him with perfect truth; *thou art bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh.*

It was not the new Adam from whom she learned her destiny, and who gave her a name; it was to her that the Most High revealed the grandeur of his Son, and conferred upon her the right of bestowing on him the adorable name of Jesus. She was not only the aid and companion of the Savior; she was his mother, and in this quality, she commanded for thirty years, Him, before whom every knee must bow, in Heaven, on earth and in Hell.*

Heaven did not reveal to the first woman the designs which it had for her; it did not ask her consent; it was without her knowledge and by the absolute will of the Creator, that she was called to share the sovereignty of the world.

God dealt differently with Mary; he deigned to communicate to her the great mystery by a prince of the celestial court. Mary makes her own conditions, stipulates the preservation of her virginity, and the *act of the Incarnation which for so many ages had held Heaven and earth in expectation, is delayed until the Virgin has consented to it.*†

What human eye can measure the distance from the Mother of God to the companion of Adam! But let us continue, Scripture in hand, the history of these two women.

Eve had scarcely come forth from the hands of the Creator, instructed by Adam in her duties, than we see her conversing with the angel of darkness, plucking the fatal fruit from the tree, and transmitting death from her own person to that of her husband and to all posterity. The two criminals,

* Luke ii. 51.

† Bossuet, I. *Sermon pour la Nativité de la Sainte Vierge*, III. Point.

filled with terror and confusion, endeavor to conceal themselves from their own eye and that of the Creator. God appears and announces long and terrible punishments.

Mary, after her interview with the messenger of Heaven, had no sooner conceived the Author of Life, than devoured by the flames of charity, she climbed mountains and entered the house of Elizabeth, a ray of life from her entered the bosom of her cousin, and awakened the infant who was sleeping there in the shades of death. *The greatest of the children of men*, having become the first of the adopted children of Mary, celebrated by a movement of joy his deliverance and the presence of his divine benefactress. The joy of the son was communicated to the mother; Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit, lavishes upon the *Mother of her Lord* the tribute of her love and reverence. Mary celebrates in a divine canticle, the accomplishment of the promise which mitigated the decree of death, long before uttered in Eden, and the streams of mercy which the Lord will pour forth through her over all generations.*

Eve brought forth her first-born, and in the joy which she feels at finding herself the mother of a man, she called him her *possession*,† a sad possession, indeed, a child who is to become the first fratricide, and people the earth with an impious and accursed race!

Mary brought forth her only son, and by the name of Savior which she gave him, she announced that he was the possessor and the possession of the world. She heard the angels celebrating the glory which he will render to God and the peace he will bring to men. She saw with grief, mingled with joy the first drop of blood shed by him, at the circumcision, for the salvation of the human race. She offered him as the victim of propitiation on the altar of the Most High, and the Most High announced to her, by the prophet Simeon,

* Luke i. 46, et seq.

† Gen. iv. 1.

that, associated herself in the sacrifice of her Son, *the sword of sorrow shall pierce her soul*.^{*} Hence with the slow martyrdom of the Son, began the slow martyrdom of the Mother, in the exile which they endured in Egypt, and in the hard and humiliating life which they led in Nazareth.

The Scripture makes no more mention of Eve after the birth of her third son; but her work survives her. The error, crime, misery and death which she introduced into the world continue their devastations and secure to her name a sad immortality.

The office of Mary expands with that of her Son. Jesus came forth from his long and obscure retreat of Nazareth, was present with some disciples at the nuptials at Cana, and Mary was at his side. Her watchful charity perceived the embarrassment of the married pair, and wishing to spare them confusion, she asked of Jesus a miracle. He seemed at first to repel her by his answer; but this answer which the enemies of the worship of Mary pervert, contains under a severe form, a magnificent eulogium upon her power. What do these words, indeed, signify: *My hour is not yet come*,[†] followed immediately by the miracle demanded, except that the prayer of Mary can hasten the movement of Omnipotence and abridge the delay which it imposes!

This *miracle*, observes the evangelist who relates it, *the first that Jesus worked, manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him*.[‡] Thus it was by the ardor of her charity and the power of her prayer that this ever-blessed Mother contributed to reveal to the world its Savior, and planted in the heart of the Apostles that faith which, some years after, covered the earth with its flowers and fruits.

Mary, during the public life of Jesus, returned to her life among her people, and was seen no more except at the foot of the Cross. How can the presence of so loving a mother

^{*} Luke ii. 35.

[†] John ii. 4.

[‡] John ii. 11.

at so heart-rending a spectacle be explained, if her place had not been designated there for the accomplishment of a great mystery, by the order of heaven!

Golgotha is the divine counterpart of the infernal drama of Eden. What do we see on both sides? A tree, a man, a woman, the invisible demon under a visible form. There is the tree of the knowledge of evil, loaded with the fruit of death; here, the tree of salvation bearing the fruit of life.

There, at the word of the infernal angel, the fruit of death fell from the tree into the lap of the woman, and passed from her hands into those of the man; and these two corrupted beings, united by the instinct of pleasure, introduced a stream of death into the veins of the human race.

Here, the fruit of life, conceived in the Woman, after her interview with the Celestial Messenger, passed from her bosom into her arms, and thence by the power of a vast charity was lifted on the tree of the Cross, where, cruelly crushed under the weight of Divine justice, he diffused over regenerated humanity a flood of blessings and of life.

There, the devil crept towards the feet of the woman, and offering her the temptation of pleasure and of grandeur he brought her with man into subjection, and precipitated both into an abyss of grief and confusion.

Satan, at the foot of the Cross, appeared to triumph over the Woman by the outrages with which he overwhelmed her, and the rage with which he assailed her Son; but it was there that the victorious foot of Mary crushed his head, and before leaving Calvary the *Sorrowing Mother* hears heaven, earth and even the demons of hell rendering homage to the Divinity of her Son, and at the same time to her Divine Maternity.*

But the point to which we should particularly give our attention in the comparison, is this; Eve having brought death into the world by drawing man into rebellion, lost all claim

* Matth. xxvii. 54.

to the glorious title of *Mother of the Living*, and if it was given her by Adam, it was on account of the blessed Daughter *full of grace and life* whom God announced to him as proceeding from a mother blighted by sin and death.

Mary, delivering up her soul to the sword of grief and associating herself with an heroic charity to the sacrifice of her Son, restores us to life by him, and receives in her maternal arms the family of the children of God, the fruit of the cruel pangs of Calvary. *Woman*, said the Savior to her, just before expiring, *behold thy Son*, showing her the only Christian present; and to the latter he said: *Behold thy Mother*.

Are not these various titles sufficient to establish the rights of Mary to the veneration, gratitude, love and confidence of the Christian, and will it be said that her divine substitution for Eve in the prerogatives and functions of common mother of the children of God is an illusion?

CHAPTER LVII.

DEVOTION TO MARY INNATE IN THE CHRISTIAN.—FIRST
SOURCE OF THIS SENTIMENT.—ITS UNIVERSALITY.—
CONCLUSION.

THE question which now occupies us is one of the heart rather than of the intellect.

Can a true Christian be found, that is to say, one animated with a sincere love for Jesus Christ, who does not turn with gratitude and affection towards the mother who bore him and whose breast has nourished him! Where is the sinner touched with grief for his faults, and struck with fear of the judgments of God, who does not invoke with confidence that Mother of mercy whose persuasive prayer smooths the brow

of our heavenly Father, and who covering with her shadow, as with a merciful cloud, the guilty earth, defends it from the fires of the sun of justice, and transmutes the scathing lightning into dew?*

What more natural than for the unhappy child of Eve who daily feels the poison of sin circulating in his veins, to have recourse to her whom heaven has chosen to dry it at its source! Does not the same faith which teaches him that the blood of Christ is the only remedy for his woes, teach him also that the blood of Christ is the blood of the Virgin?

We are accused of exalting the power of Mary too much by calling her the dispenser of graces; but is it not through her that God has chosen to give us his Son, who is the source of all graces? It is called a crime in us to go to Jesus through Mary; but is it not through Mary that Jesus has come to us? Is the interposition of this Divine Mother anything but a divine fact which the Catholic does not create, but which he recognizes and accepts?

These considerations, like all those which we have hitherto developed, are no doubt adapted to justify the sentiment of filial piety of the Catholics towards the Mother of God; but they do not create it. This sentiment has an origin more profound, more intimate, more powerful; it is the effect of the communication which Jesus Christ makes us of his life, even the voice of his blood which flows in our veins.

Let us here call to mind the Catholic doctrine of Christian justification, and the ineffable union which the sacraments establish between Christ and the Faithful. The assured effect of baptism, according to all evangelical principles, is to make us children of God and brothers of Jesus Christ, or rather his living members; but can one be a brother of Jesus Christ without being a child of Mary? Can we live according to

* *Ego feci in cœlis ut oriretur lumen indeficiens, et sicut nebula texi omnem terram.* (Eccles. xxiv. 6.)

his moral life, and be animated with his sentiments, without sharing his tenderness for his Mother? Is not our *affiliation with Mary* the necessary effect of our *transubstantiation to Christ* in the Eucharistic Sacrament? Can the blood of the Son really circulate in our hearts without making them thrill with love for the Mother, and without calling down upon us all the tenderness of Mary?

If we examine this subject a little, we shall see that the devotion towards Mary has its root in the very foundations of Christianity, that it is the logical and necessary consequence of the intimate relations of Christ with his members; we shall see even in the profound indifference of the partisans of Reform for the Mother an unequivocal proof of their rupture with the Son.

It is a remarkable fact and one which proves how naturally the devotion to Mary finds its place in the Christian soul, that among the number of Protestants who are every day returning to Catholicism, there are scarcely any who experience the least repugnance to this devotion. Many had even long cherished in their heart a profound veneration for the Mother of Christ, and were afflicted at the cruel neglect in which Protestant worship had buried her. Let us listen to the words of a man whose return is at this moment giving joy to the Catholic world.

"From my earliest years," says M. Hurter, "without seeking instruction from any book, without entering into any discussion, without possessing any knowledge of Catholic teaching with regard to the Mother of God, I felt myself penetrated with an inexpressible veneration for her. I imagined in her the advocate of the Christian, and from the depths of my heart I addressed myself to her in the retirement of my private life."*

* *Exposé des motifs qui ont décidé son retour dans le sein de l'Eglise Catholique.* (See *L'Ami de la Religion*, Sept. 5th, 1844.)

To these *testimonies of the naturally Christian soul* in favor of the worship of Mary, to this mass of Biblical facts and christian arguments which conspire to justify it, what can its miserable detractors oppose?

They demand one passage of Scripture which prescribes, or at least authorises this worship. But has not Christ said to us all, in the person of the well-beloved disciple, *behold your Mother!* as he commanded us all in the person of the Apostles, *receive and eat; this is my body.** Do not the Scriptures show us every where Mary fulfilling towards us the office of the most devoted Mother, and submitting her heart to the most dreadful tortures in order to restore to us the most precious of lives? What more is necessary for well-disposed children? What can we think of that heart which, in presence of the best of Mothers, would wait for the order to love her!

If the words of Scripture are needed to authorise the honors which we render to Mary, the Holy Spirit himself announced, by the mouth of Mary, the concert of benedictions which will be eternally ascending to her from the midst of all the generations of humanity; "*And behold from this moment all generations shall call me blessed.†*"

Where among us, we would ask of our separated brethren, is that public testimony of veneration and love towards the Mother of the God-Savior? For the three centuries of your existence, what are the monuments which you have reared in the midst of you in her honor? For monuments are the voice of the people, the sensible expression of their thought.

* We may find a learned and splendid demonstration of what we can here only hint at, in the work of Father Ventura, *La Madre di Dio, Madre degli Uomini*, &c. Rome, 1841; and we are happy to be able to announce to our readers, that the Lyonesse press will soon give to France an excellent translation of this work.

† Luke i. 48.

What do we discover in our cities and our villages which recalls the memory of Mary, but the ruins of temples and the shapeless fragments of statues which the piety of your Catholic fathers had dedicated to her? What do we find in your sacred orators and writers, but a torrent of calumnies, insults and sarcasms against the servants of the common Mother.

It is inconceivable and even deplored by one of your most able ministers, that the Woman by pre-eminence—she whom heaven has exalted far above all women—is precisely the only one whose praises and whose name your worship prescribes.* Is this knowing and honoring Christ? Do you believe that he who was so sensible of the least favor, and who wished that the memory of the woman who shed precious perfume upon his head, should be spread as far and endure as long as the Gospel, that he would approve among Christians this disgraceful neglect of the incomparable Mother who formed him of her flesh and blood, nourished him with her milk, followed him to the foot of the Cross, and received in her arms his inanimate remains! Let us review all the Christian ages, and find if we can, one of them which has not realised the prophetic language of Mary by striking demonstrations of its piety towards her. What religious emulation to celebrate and honor the Mother, among all people who have known and adored the Son! We nowhere discover that solitary and abstract Christ, dreamed of by the founders of your worship, but Christ as he showed himself to the eye of the prophets, as he appears in the Gospel; a child

* “No one dares to speak of Mary. And yet when theological prejudice is no longer present to oppose good sense and reason, true natural feeling takes the ascendancy, and ministers discourse at the cemetery or in the temple, upon the men and women whom they enter.” (M. C. A. Muller, *Des Beaux-Arts et de la Langue des signes*, &c., p. 42.)

of the Virgin, long borne in her bosom and in her arms, fulfilling towards her for thirty years the duties of the most obedient Son, expiring under her eyes, and still reposing in her arms before passing from the Cross to the sepulchre.

Let us interrogate all the christian nations; we shall not find one of the great voices of Christianity from the first successors of Peter to Gregory XVI., from Ignatius, Irenæus, Epiphanius, Cyril, Ambrose and Augustine, to Bossuet and Fénelon, who has not entoned a hymn of praise to Mary; not a sovereign dear to religion, who has not wished to reign under her auspices; not an illustrious name in science, literature or the fine arts, who has not consecrated to her some of his vigils. How many great works in every department have been inspired by devotion to Mary!

What year has passed when the faithful have not repeatedly thronged to the foot of her altars to solemnise her festivals; what week of which they have not consecrated one day to her memory; what day when the bell does not summon them to address to her the angelical salutation. There is no city where she has not a temple, no temple where she has not an altar, no altar which does not present some memorial of the confidence of the children and the bounty of the Mother.

And when has this universal sentiment of tender devotion to Mary, which we see triumphing over the sarcasms of impiety and heresy, as well as over the destroying influence of time, when has it appeared with more energy than in our age of coldness and indifference! Admirable instinct of the Christian family! it is at a time when the hissing of the serpent makes itself most loudly heard and his last venom is distilled, that on all sides rise the most ardent prayers towards her who has bruised his head; it is at a time when infamous inventors of romance penetrate the deepest folds of the human heart to introduce into it their corruption, that the shepherds

and their flocks seek an asylum in the *Immaculate Heart* whose ineffable purity is never tarnished by a breath of impurity.* As children in extreme peril, they are not satisfied with pressing around their mother and taking refuge in her arms, but they throw themselves upon her bosom.

My beloved separated brethren, for a moment impose silence upon prejudices which are no less repugnant to the feelings than the understanding of the Christian, and ask yourselves if that is not the true family of Christ, where his Divine Mother is most reverently cherished and honored.

* Arch-confraternity of the Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary.

THE END.

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"THE AUTHOR.

"MOUNT BELLINGHAM,

"Maunday Thursday, 1852."

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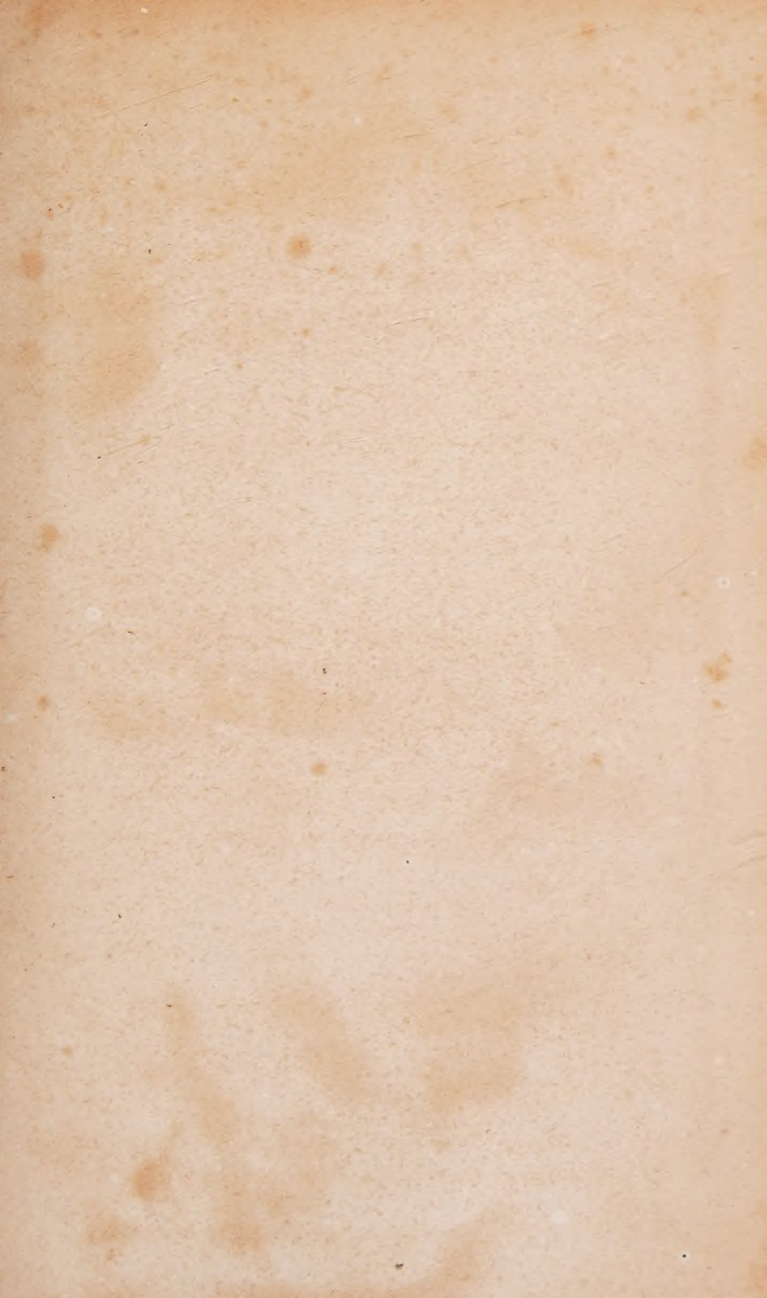
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